THE

LETTERS

OF

Sir Thomas Fitzosborne,

ON

SEVERAL SUBJECTS.

absentis pignus amicitiæ. MART.

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LETTERS

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ON

SEVERAL SUBJECTS.

LETTER I.

To CLYTANDER.

Sept. 1739.

I ENTIRELY approve of your deſign: but whilſt I rejoice in the hope of ſeeing Enthuſiaſm thus ſucceſsfully attacked in her ſtrongeſt and moſt formidable holds, I would claim your mercy for her in another quarter; and after having expelled her from her religious dominions, let me intreat you to leave her in the undiſturbed enjoyment of her civil poſſeſſions. To own the truth, I look upon enthuaſiaſm in all other points but that of

religion, to be a very neceſſary turn of mind; as indeed it is a vein which nature ſeems to have marked with more or leſs ſtrength in the tempers of moſt men. No matter what the object is, whether buſineſs, pleaſures, or the fine arts; whoever purſues them to any purpoſe muſt do ſo *con amore:* and inamoratos, you know, of every kind are all enthuſiaſts. There is indeed a certain heightening faculty which univerſally prevails thro' our ſpecies; and we are all of us, perhaps, in our ſeveral favorite purſuits, pretty much in the circumſtances of the renowed knight of La Mancha, when he attacked the barber's brazen baſon, for Mambrino's golden helmet.

WHAT is Tully's *aliquid immenſum infinitumque*, which he profeſſes to aſpire after in oratory, but a piece of true rhetorical Quixotiſm? Yet never, I will venture to affirm, would he have glowed with ſo much eloquence, had he been warmed with leſs enthuſiaſm. I am perſuaded indeed, that nothing great or glorious was ever performed, where this quality had not a principal concern; and

as

as our paſſions add vigor to our actions, enthuſiaſm gives ſpirit to our paſſions. I might add too, that it even opens and enlarges our capacities. Accordingly I have been informed, that one of the great lights of the preſent age never ſits down to ſtudy, till he has raiſed his imagination by the power of muſic. For this purpoſe he has a band of inſtruments placed near his library, which play till he finds himſelf elevated to a proper height; upon which he gives a ſignal, and they inſtantly ceaſe.

But thoſe *high conceits* which are ſuggeſted by enthuſiaſm, contribute not only to the pleaſure and perfection of the fine arts, but to moſt other effects of our action and induſtry. To ſtrike this ſpirit therefore out of the human conſtitution, to reduce things to their preciſe philoſophical ſtandard, would be to check ſome of the main wheels of ſociety, and to fix half the world in an uſeleſs apathy. For if enthuſiaſm did not add an imaginary value to moſt of the objects of our purſuit; if fancy did not give them their brighteſt colors, they would generally,

perhaps, wear an appearance too contemptible to excite deſire:

Weary'd we ſhould lie down in death,
This cheat of life would take no more,
If you thought fame an empty breath,
I Phillis but a perjur'd whore. PRIOR.

IN a word, this enthuſiaſm for which I am pleading, is a beneficent enchantreſs, who never exerts her magic but to our advantage, and only deals about her friendly ſpells in order to raiſe imaginary beauties, or to improve real ones. The worſt that can be ſaid of her is, that ſhe is a kind deceiver and an obliging flatterer. Let me conjure you then, good Clytander, not to break up her uſeful enchantments, which thus ſurround us on every ſide; but ſpare her harmleſs deceptions in mere charity to mankind. I am, &c.

LETTER II.

To PHILOTES.

I SHOULD not have ſuffered ſo long an interval to interrupt our correſpondence if my expedition to Euphronius had

had not wholly employed me for theſe laſt ſix weeks. I had long promiſed to ſpend ſome time with him before he embarked with his regiment for Flanders; and as he is not one of thoſe Hudibraſtic heroes who chooſe to run away one day, that they may live to fight another; I was unwilling to truſt the opportunity of ſeeing him, to the very precarious contingency of his return. The high enjoyments he leaves behind him, might indeed be a pledge to his friends that his caution would at leaſt be equal to his courage, if his notions of honour were leſs exquiſitely delicate. But he will undoubtedly act as if he had nothing to hazard; though at the ſame time, from the generous ſenſibility of his temper, he feels every thing that his family can ſuffer in their fears for his danger. I had an inſtance whilſt I was in his houſe, how much Euphronia's apprehenſions for his ſafety are ready to take alarm upon every occaſion. She called me one day into the gallery to look upon a picture which was juſt come out of the painter's hands; but the moment ſhe carried me up to it, ſhe burſt out into

a flood of tears. It was drawn at the requeſt, and after a deſign of her father's, and is a performance which does great honour to the ingenious artiſt who executed it. Euphronius is repreſented under the character of Hector when he parts from Andromache, who is perſonated in the piece by Euphronia; as her ſiſter, who holds their little boy in her arms, is ſhadowed out under the figure of the beautiful nurſe with the young Aſtyanax.

I was ſo much pleaſed with the deſign in this uncommon family-piece, that I thought it deſerved particular mention; as I could wiſh it were to become a general faſhion to have all pictures of the ſame kind executed in ſome ſuch manner. If inſtead of furniſhing a room with ſeparate portraits, a whole family were to be thus introduced into a ſingle piece, and repreſented under ſome intereſting hiſtorical ſubject, ſuitable to their rank and character; portraits, which are now ſo generally and ſo deſervedly deſpiſed, might become of real value to the public. By this means hiſtory-painting would be encouraged among us, and a ridiculous vanity

turned

turned to the improvement of one of the moſt inſtructive, as well as the moſt pleaſing, of the imitative arts. Thoſe who never contributed a ſingle benefit to their own age, nor will ever be mentioned in any after-one, might by this means employ their pride and their expence in a way, which might render them entertaining and uſeful both to the preſent and future times. It would require, indeed, great judgment and addreſs in the painter, to chooſe and recommend ſubjects proper to the various characters which would preſent themſelves to his pencil; and undoubtedly we ſhould ſee many enormous abſurdities committed, if this faſhion were univerſally to be followed. It would certainly, however, afford a glorious ſcope to genius; and probably ſupply us, in due time, with ſome productions which might be mentioned with thoſe of the moſt celebrated ſchools. I am perſuaded at leaſt, that great talents have been ſometimes loſt to this art, by being confined to the dull, tho profitable, labour of ſenſeleſs portraits; as I ſhould not doubt, if the method I am ſpeaking of were to take ef-

fect, to ſee that very promiſing genius, who, in conſequence of your generous offices, is now forming his hand by the nobleſt models in Rome, prove a rival to thoſe great maſters whoſe works he is ſtudying.

It cannot, I think, be denied, that the prevailing fondneſs of having our perſons copied out for poſterity, is, in the preſent application of it, a moſt abſurd and uſeleſs vanity; as, in general, nothing affords a more ridiculous ſcene, than thoſe groteſque figures which uſually line the manſions of a man who is fond of diſplaying his canvas-anceſtry:

Good Heav'n! that ſots and knaves ſhould be
ſo vain,
To wiſh their vile reſemblance may remain;
And ſtand recorded, at their own requeſt,
To future times a libel or a jeſt. DRYDEN.

You muſt by no means, however, imagine that I abſolutely condemn this lower application of one of the nobleſt arts. It has certainly a very juſt uſe, when employed in perpetuating the reſemblances of that part of our ſpecies, who have diſtinguiſhed

guiſhed themſelves in their reſpective generations. To be deſirous of an acquaintance with the perſons of thoſe who have recommended themſelves by their writings or their actions to our eſteem and applauſe, is a very natural and reaſonable curioſity. For myſelf, at leaſt, I have often found much ſatisfaction in contemplating a well-choſen collection of the portrait kind, and comparing the mind of a favorite character, as it was either expreſſed or concealed in its external lineaments. There is ſomething likewiſe extremely animating in theſe lively repreſentations of celebrated merit: and it was an obſervation of one of the Scipio's, that he could never view the figures of his anceſtors without finding his boſom glow with the moſt ardent paſſion of imitating their deeds. However, as the days of exemplary virtue are now no more, and we are not, many of us, diſpoſed to tranſmit the moſt inflaming models to future times; it would be but prudence, methinks, if we are reſolved to make poſterity acquainted with the perſons of the preſent

preſent age, that it ſhould be by viewing them in the actions of the paſt. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER III.

To PALAMEDES.

July, 4, 1739.

NOTWITHSTANDING the fine things you alledge in favour of the Romans, I do not yet find myſelf diſpoſed to become a convert to your opinion: on the contrary, I am ſtill obſtinate enough to maintain that the fame of your admired nation is more dazzling than ſolid, and owing rather to thoſe falſe prejudices which we are early taught to conceive of them, than to their real and intrinſic merit. If conqueſt indeed be the genuine glory of a ſtate, and extenſive dominions the moſt infallible teſt of national virtue; it muſt be acknowledged that no people in all hiſtory have ſo juſt a demand of our admiration. But if we take an impartial view of this celebrated nation, perhaps much of our applauſe may abate. When

we

we contemplate them, for inſtance, within their own walls, what do we ſee but the dangerous convulſions of an ill-regulated policy? as we can ſeldom, I believe, conſider them with reſpect to foreign kingdoms, without the utmoſt abhorrence and indignation.

But there is nothing which places theſe ſons of Romulus lower in my eſtimation, than their unmanly conduct in the article of their triumphs. I muſt confeſs, at the ſame time, that they had the ſanction of a god to juſtify them in this practice. Bacchus, or (as Sir Iſaac Newton has proved) the Egyptian Seſoſtris, after his return from his Indian conqueſts, gave the firſt inſtance of this ungenerous ceremony. But tho' his divinity was confeſſed in many other parts of the world; his example does not ſeem to have been followed till we find it copied out in all its inſolent pomp at Rome.

It is impoſſible to read the deſcriptions of theſe arrogant exhibitions of proſperity, and not be ſtruck with indignation at this barbarous method of inſulting the calamities of the unfortunate.

One would be apt, at the firſt glance, to ſuſpect that every ſentiment of humanity muſt be extinguiſhed in a people, who could behold with pleaſure the moving inſtances, which theſe ſolemnities afforded, of the caprice of fortune; and could ſee the higheſt potentates of the earth dragged from their thrones, to fill up the proud parade of theſe ungenerous triumphs. But the prevailing maxim which ran thro' the whole ſyſtem of Roman politics was, to encourage a ſpirit of conqueſt; and theſe honors were evidently calculated to awaken that unjuſt principle of miſtaken patriotiſm. Accordingly, by the fundamental laws of Rome, no general was entitled to a triumph, unleſs he had added ſome new acquiſition to her poſſeſſions. To ſuppreſs a civil inſurrection, however dangerous; to recover any former member of her dominions, however important; gave no claim to this ſupreme mark of ambitious diſtinction. For it was their notion, it ſeems, (and Valerius Maximus is my authority for ſaying ſo) that there is as much difference between adding to the territories of a common-

commonwealth, and reſtoring thoſe it has loſt, as between the actual conferring of a benefit, and the mere repelling of an injury. It was but of a piece, indeed, that a ceremony conducted in defiance of humanity, ſhould be founded in contempt of juſtice; and it was natural enough that they ſhould gain by oppreſſion, what they were to enjoy by inſult.

If we conſider Paulus Æmilius after his conqueſt of Macedonia, making his public entry into Rome, attended by the unfortunate Perſeus and his infant family; and at the ſame time reflect upon our Black Prince when he paſſed thro' London with his royal captive, after the glorious battle of Poictiers; we cannot fail of having the proper ſentiments of a Roman triumph. What generous mind who ſaw the Roman conſul in all the giddy exaltation of unfeeling pride, but would rather (as to that ſingle circumſtance) have been the degraded Perſeus, than the triumphant Æmilius? There is ſomething indeed in diſtreſs that reflects a ſort of merit upon every object which is ſo ſituated, and turns off our attention from

from thoſe blemiſhes that ſtain even the moſt vitious characters. Accordingly in the inſtance of which I am ſpeaking, the perfidious monarch was overlooked in the ſuffering Perſeus; and a ſpectacle ſo affecting checked the joy of conqueſt even in a Roman breaſt. For Plutarch aſſures us, when that worthleſs, but unhappy, prince was obſerved, together with his two ſons and a daughter, marching amidſt the train of priſoners; nature was too hard for cuſtom, and many of the ſpectators melted into a flood of tears. But with what a generous tenderneſs did the Britiſh hero conduct himſelf upon an occaſion of the ſame kind? He employed all the artful addreſs of the moſt refined humanity, to conceal from his unhappy priſoner every thing that could remind him of his diſgrace; and the whole pomp that was diſplayed upon this occaſion, appeared ſingly as intended to lighten the weight of his misfortunes, and to do honor to the vanquiſhed monarch.

You will remember, Palamedes, I am only conſidering the Romans in a political view, and ſpeaking of them merely in their

their national character. As to individuals, you know, I pay the higheſt veneration to many that roſe up againſt them. It would not indeed be juſt to involve particulars, in general reflections of any kind: and I cannot but acknowledge ere I cloſe my letter, that tho in the article I have been mentioning, the Romans certainly acted a moſt unworthy part towards their public enemies, yet they ſeem to have maintained the moſt exalted notions of conduct with reſpect to their private ones. That noble (and may I not add, that Chriſtian) ſentiment of Juvenal,

minuti
Semper et infirmi eſt animi exiguique voluptas, Ultio.

was not merely the refined precept of their more improved philoſophers, but a general and popular maxim among them: and that generous ſentiment ſo much and ſo deſervedly admired in the Roman orator; *Non pœnitet me mortales inimicitias, ſempiternas amicitias habere*, was, as appears from Livy, ſo univerſally received as to become even a proverbial expreſſion. Thus Saluſt likewiſe, I remember, ſpeaking of the

the virtues of the antient Romans, mentions it as their principal characteriſtic, that upon all occaſions they ſhewed a diſpoſition rather to forgive than revenge an injury. But the falſe notions they had embraced concerning the glory of their country, taught them to ſubdue every affection of humanity, and extinguiſh every dictate of juſtice which oppoſed that deſtructive principle. It was this ſpirit, however, in return and by a very juſt conſequence, that proved at length the means of their total deſtruction. Farewel. I am, &c.

LETTER IV.

To PHILOTES.

July 4, 1743.

WHILST you are probably enjoying blue ſkies and cooling grots; I am ſhivering here in the midſt of ſummer. The *molles ſub arbore ſomni*, the *ſpeluncæ vivique lacus*, are pleaſures which we in England can ſeldom taſte but in deſcription. For in a climate, where the warmeſt

warmeſt ſeaſon is frequently little better than a milder ſort of winter, the ſun is much too welcome a gueſt to be avoided. If ever we have occaſion to complain of him, it muſt be for his abſence: at leaſt I have ſeldom found his viſits troubleſome. You ſee I am ſtill the ſame cold mortal as when you left me. But whatever warmth I may want in my conſtitution, I want none in my affections; and you have not a friend who is more ardently yours than I pretend to be. You have indeed ſuch a right to my heart from mere gratitude, that I almoſt wiſh I owed you leſs upon that account, that I might give it you upon a more diſintereſted principle. However, if there is any part of it which you cannot demand in juſtice, be aſſured you have it by affection; ſo that, on one or other of theſe titles, you may always depend upon me as wholly yours. Can it be neceſſary after this to add, that I received your letter with ſingular ſatisfaction, as it brought me an account of your welfare, and of the agreeable manner in which you paſs your time? If there be any room to wiſh you an increaſe of pleaſure, it is,

perhaps, that the three virgins you mention, were a few degrees handſomer and younger. But I would not deſire their charms ſhould be heightened, were I not ſure they will never leſſen your repoſe; for knowing your Stoiciſm, as I do, I dare truſt your eaſe with any thing leſs than a goddeſs: and thoſe females, I perceive, are ſo far removed from the order of divinities, that they ſeem to require a conſiderable advance before I could even allow them to be ſo much as women.

It was mentioned to me the other day, that there is ſome probability we may ſee you in England by the winter. When I conſidered only my private ſatisfaction, I heard this with a very ſenſible pleaſure. But as I have long learned to ſubmit my own intereſts to yours, I could not but regret there was a likelihood of your being ſo ſoon called off from one of the moſt advantageous opportunities of improvement that can attend a ſenſible mind. An ingenious Italian author of your acquaintance, compares a judicious traveller to a river that increaſes its ſtream the farther it flows from its ſource; or to certain ſprings, which

running

running thro rich veins of mineral, improve their qualities as they paſs along. It were pity then, you ſhould be checked in ſo uſeful a progreſs, and diverted from a courſe, from whence you may derive ſo many noble advantages. You have hitherto, I imagine, been able to do little more than lay in materials for your main deſign. But ſix months now, would give you a truer notion of what is worthy of obſervation in the countries thro which you paſs, than twice that time when you were leſs acquainted with the languages. The truth is, 'till a man is capable of converſing with eaſe among the natives of any country, he can never be able to form a juſt and adequate idea of their policy and manners. He who ſits at a play without underſtanding the dialect, may indeed diſcover which of the actors are beſt dreſſed, and how well the ſcenes are painted or diſpoſed; but the characters and conduct of the drama muſt for ever remain a ſecret to him. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER V.

To CLYTANDER.

IF I had been a party in the converſation you mention, I ſhould have joined, I believe, with your friend in ſupporting thoſe ſentiments you ſeem to condemn. I will venture indeed to acknowledge, that I have long been of opinion, the moderns pay too blind a deference to the antients; and though I have the higheſt veneration for ſeveral of their remains, yet I am inclined to think they have occaſioned us the loſs of ſome excellent originals. They are the proper and beſt guides, I allow, to thoſe who have not the force to break out into new paths. But whilſt it is thought ſufficient praiſe to be their followers, genius is checked in her flights, and many a fair tract lies undiſcovered in the boundleſs regions of imagination. Thus, had Virgil truſted more to his native ſtrength, the Romans, perhaps, might have ſeen an original Epic in their language. But Homer was conſidered by that admired poet as the ſacred object

ject of his firſt and principal attention; and he ſeemed to think it the nobleſt triumph of genius, to be adorned with the ſpoils of that glorious chief.

You will tell me, perhaps, that even Homer himſelf was indebetd to the antients; that the full ſtreams he diſpenſed, did not flow from his own ſource, but were derived to him from an higher. This, I acknowledge, has been aſſerted: but aſſerted without proof, and, I may venture to add, without probability. He ſeems to have ſtood alone and unſupported; and to have ſtood, for that very reaſon, ſo much the nobler object of admiration. Scarce indeed, I imagine, would his works have received that high regard which was paid to them from their earlieſt appearance, had they been formed upon prior models, had they ſhone only with reflected light.

But will not this ſervile humor of ſubjecting the powers of invention to the guidance of the ancients, account, in ſome degree at leaſt, for our meeting with ſo ſmall a number of authors who can claim the merit of being originals? Is not this a kind of ſubmiſſion, that damps the fire and

weakens the vigor of the mind? For the antients ſeem to be conſidered by us as ſo many guards to prevent the free excurſions of imagination, and ſet bounds to her flight. Whereas they ought rather to be looked upon (the few, I mean, who are themſelves originals) as encouragements to a full and uncontrouled exertion of her faculties. But if here or there a poet has courage enough to truſt to his own unaſſiſted reach of thought, his example does not ſeem ſo much to incite others to make the ſame adventurous attempts, as to confirm them in the humble diſpoſition of imitation. For if he ſucceeds, he immediately becomes himſelf the occaſion of a thouſand models: if he does not, he is pointed out as a diſcouraging inſtance of the folly of renouncing thoſe eſtabliſhed leaders which antiquity has authorized. Thus invention is depreſſed, and genius enſlaved: the creative power of poetry is loſt, and the ingenious, inſtead of exerting that productive faculty which alone can render them the juſt objects of admiration, are humbly contented with borrowing both the materials and the plans of their mimic ſtructures. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER VI.

To ORONTES.

March 10, 1729.

THERE is nothing, perhaps, wherein mankind are more frequently miſtaken, than in the judgments which they paſs on each other. The ſtronger lines, indeed, in every man's character muſt always be marked too clearly and diſtinctly to deceive even the moſt careleſs obſerver; and no one, I am perſuaded, was ever eſteemed in the general opinion of the world as highly deficient in his moral or intellectual qualities, who did not juſtly merit his reputation. But I ſpeak only of thoſe more nice and delicate traits which diſtinguiſh the ſeveral degrees of probity and good-ſenſe, and aſcertain the quantum (if I may ſo expreſs it) of human merit. The powers of the ſoul are ſo often concealed by modeſty, diffidence, timidity, and a thouſand other accidental affections; and the nice complexion of her moral operations depends ſo entirely on thoſe internal principles from whence they

proceed; that thoſe who form their notions of others by caſual and diſtant views, muſt unavoidably be led into very erroneous judgments. Even Orontes, with all his candour and penetration, is not, I perceive, entirely ſecure from miſtakes of this ſort; and the ſentiments you expreſſed in your laſt letter concerning Varus, are by no means agreeable to the truth of his character.

It muſt be acknowledged at the ſame time, that Varus is an exception to all general rules: neither his head nor his heart are exactly to be diſcovered by thoſe indexes, which are uſually ſuppoſed to point directly to the genius and temper of other men. Thus with a memory that will ſcarce ſerve him for the common purpoſes of life, with an imagination even more ſlow than his memory, and with an attention that could not carry him thro the eaſieſt propoſition in Euclid; he has a ſound and excellent underſtanding joined to a refined and exquiſite taſte. But the rectitude of his ſentiments ſeems to ariſe leſs from reflection than ſenſation; rather from certain ſuitable feelings which the objects that preſent

ſent themſelves to his conſideration inſtantly occaſion in his mind, than from the energy of any active faculties which he is capable of exerting for that purpoſe. His converſation is unentertaining: for tho he talks a great deal, all that he utters is delivered with labor and heſitation. Not that his ideas are really dark and confuſed; but becauſe he is never contented to convey them in the firſt words that occur. Like the orator mentioned by Tully, *metuens ne vitioſum colligeret, etiam verum ſanguinem deperdebat*, he expreſſes himſelf ill by always endeavouring to expreſs himſelf better. His reading cannot ſo properly be ſaid to have rendered him knowing, as not ignorant: it has rather enlarged, than filled his mind.

His temper is as ſingular as his genius, and both equally miſtaken by thoſe who only know him a little. If you were to judge of him by his general appearance, you would believe him incapable of all the more delicate ſenſations: nevertheleſs, under a rough and boiſterous behavior, he conceals a heart full of tenderneſs and humanity. He has a ſenſibility of nature, indeed,

deed, beyond what I ever obſerved in any other man; and I have often ſeen him affected by thoſe little circumſtances, which would make no impreſſion on a mind of leſs exquiſite feelings. This extreme ſenſibility in his temper influences his ſpeculations as well as his actions, and he hovers between various hypotheſes without ſettling upon any, by giving im portance to theſe minuter difficulties which would not be ſtrong enough to ſuſpend a more active and vigorous mind. In a word, Varus is in the number of thoſe whom it is impoſſible not to admire or not to deſpiſe; and at the ſame time that he is the eſteem of all his friends, he is the contempt of all his acquaintance. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER VII.

To HORTENSIUS.

YOUR excellent brawn wanted no additional recommendation to make it more acceptable, but that of your company. However, tho I cannot ſhare it with my

my friend, I devote it to his memory, and make daily offerings of it to a certain divinity, whoſe temples, though now well-nigh deſerted, were once held in the higheſt veneration: ſhe is mentioned by antient authors under the name and title of DIVA AMICITIA. To her I bring the victim you have furniſhed me with, in all the pomp of Roman rites. Wreathed with the ſacred *vitta*, and crowned with a branch of roſemary, I place it on an altar of well poliſhed mahogony, where I pour libations over it of acid wine, and ſprinkle it with flour of muſtard. I deal out certain portions to thoſe who aſſiſt at this ſocial ceremony, reminding them, with an *Hoc age*, of the important buſineſs upon which they are aſſembled; and conclude the feſtival with this votive couplet:

Cloſe as this brawn the circling fillet binds,
May friendſhip's ſacred bands unite our minds!

Farewel. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER VIII.

To CLYTANDER.

July 2, 1736.

YOU muſt have been greatly diſtreſſed indeed, Clytander, when you thought of calling me in as your auxiliary, in the debate you mention. Or was it not rather a motive of generoſity which ſuggeſted that deſign? and you were willing, perhaps, I ſhould ſhare the glory of a victory which you had already ſecured. Whatever *your* intention was, *mine* is always to comply with your requeſts; and I very readily enter the liſts, when I am at once to combat in the cauſe of truth and on the ſide of my friend.

IT is not neceſſary, I think, in order to eſtabliſh the credibility of a particular Providence, to deduce it (as your objector, I find, ſeems to require) from known and undiſputed facts. I ſhould be exceedingly cautious in pointing out any ſuppoſed inſtances of that kind; as thoſe who are fond of indulging themſelves in determining the preciſe caſes wherein they imagine

gine the immediate interpoſition of the divinity is diſcoverable, often run into the weakeſt and moſt injurious ſuperſtitions. It is impoſſible indeed, unleſs we were capable of looking thro the whole chain of things, and of viewing each effect in its remote connections and final iſſues, to pronounce of any contingency, that it is abſolutely and in its ultimate tendencies either good or bad. *That* can only be known by the great Author of nature, who comprehends the full extent of our total exiſtence, and ſees the influence which every particular circumſtance will have in the general ſum of our happineſs. But tho the peculiar points of divine interpoſition are thus neceſſarily, and from the natural imperfection of our diſcerning faculties, extremely dubious; yet it can by no means from thence be juſtly inferred, that the doctrine of a particular providence is either groundleſs or abſurd: the general principle may be true, tho the application of it to any given purpoſe be involved in very inextricable difficulties.

The notion, that the material world is governed by general mechanical laws, has induced

induced your friend to argue, that " it is " probable the Deity ſhould act by the " ſame rule of conduct in the intellectual; " and leave moral agents entirely to thoſe " conſequences which neceſſarily reſult " from the particular exerciſe of their ori- " ginal powers." But this hypotheſis takes a queſtion for granted, which requires much proof before it can be admitted. The grand principle which preſerves this ſyſtem of the univerſe in all its harmonious order, is gravity, or that property by which all the particles of matter mutually tend to each other. Now this is a power which, it is acknowledged, does not eſſentially reſide in matter, but muſt be ultimately derived from the action of ſome immaterial cauſe. Why therefore may it not reaſonably be ſuppoſed to be the effect of the divine agency, immediately and conſtantly operating for the preſervation of this wonderful machine of nature? Certain, at leaſt, it is, that the explication which Sir Iſaac Newton has endeavoured to give of this wonderful phenomenon, by means of his ſubtil ether, has not afforded univerſal ſatisfaction: and it is the opinion of a

very great writer, who ſeems to have gone far into enquiries of this abſtruſe kind, that the numberleſs effects of this power are inexplicable upon mechanical principles, or in any other way than by having recourſe to a ſpiritual agent, who connects, moves, and diſpoſes all things according to ſuch methods as beſt comport with his incomprehenſible purpoſes.

But ſucceſsful villainy and oppreſſed virtue are deemed, I perceive, in the account of your friend, as powerful inſtances to prove, that the Supreme being remains an uninterpoſing ſpectator of what is tranſacted upon this theatre of the world. However, ere this argument can have a determining weight, it muſt be proved (which yet, ſurely, never can be proved) that proſperous iniquity has all thoſe advantages in reality, which it may ſeem to have in appearance; and that thoſe accidents which are uſually eſteemed as calamities, do in truth, and in the juſt ſcale of things, deſerve to be diſtinguiſhed by that appellation. It is a noble ſaying of the philoſopher cited by Seneca, that "there "cannot be a more unhappy man in the "world,

" world, than he who has never experi-
" enced adverſity." There is nothing, perhaps, in which mankind are more apt to make falſe calculations than in the article both of their own happineſs and that of others; as there are few, I believe, who have lived any time in the world, but have found frequent occaſions to ſay with the poor hunted ſtag in the fable, who was entangled by thoſe horns he had but juſt before been admiring;

O me infelicem! qui nunc demum intelligo,
Ut illa mihi profuerint quæ deſpexeram,
Et quæ laudaram quantum luctus habuerint!

PHÆD.

If we look back upon the ſentiments of paſt ages, we ſhall find, the opinion for which I am contending has prevailed from the remoteſt account of time. It muſt undoubtedly have entered the world as early as religion herſelf; ſince all inſtitutions of that kind muſt neceſſarily be founded upon the ſuppoſition of a particular providence. It appears indeed to have been the favorite doctrine of ſome of the moſt diſtinguiſhed names in antiquity. Xenophon tells us, when Cyrus led out his army

army againſt the Aſſyrians, the word which he gave to his ſoldiers was, ΖΕΥΣ ΣΥΜΜΑΧΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΗΓΕΜΩΝ, "Jupiter the "defender and conducter:" and he repreſents that prince as attributing ſucceſs even in the ſports of the field, to divine providence. Thus, likewiſe, Timeleon (as the author of his life aſſures us) believed every action of mankind to be under the immediate influence of the Gods: and Livy remarks of the firſt Scipio Africanus, that he never undertook any important affair, either of private or public concern, without going to the Capitol in order to implore the aſſiſtance of Jupiter. Balbus the Stoic, in the dialogue on the nature of the gods, expreſſly declares for a particular providence: and Cicero himſelf, in one of his orations, imputes that ſuperior glory which attended the Roman nation, ſingly to this animating perſuaſion. But none of the antients ſeem to have had a ſtronger impreſſion of this truth upon their minds, than the immortal Homer. Every page in the works of that divine poet will furniſh proofs of this obſervation. I cannot however for-

bear mentioning one or two remarkable inſtances, which juſt now occur to me. When the Grecian chiefs caſt lots which of them ſhould accept the challenge of Hector, the poet deſcribes the army as lifting up their eyes and hands to heaven, and imploring the gods that they would direct the lot to fall on one of their moſt diſtinguiſhed heroes:

Λαοι—θεοισι δε χειρας ανεσχον,
Ωδε τις ειπεσκεν, ιδων εις ουρανον ευρυν·
Ζευ πατερ, η Αιανθα λαχειν, η Τυδεος υιον,
Η αυτον Βασιληα πολυχρυσοιο Μυκηνης [a].

So likewiſe Antenor propoſes to the Trojans the reſtitution of Helen, as having no hopes, he tells them, that any thing would ſucceed with them after they had broken the faith of treaties:

νυν ορκια πιστα
Ψευσαμενοι μαχομεθα· τω ου νυ τι κερδιον ημιν
Ελπομαι εκτελεεσθαι [b].

[a] *The people pray with lifted eyes and hands,*
And vows like thoſe aſcend from all the bands:
Grant, thou Almighty, in whoſe hand is fate,
A worthy champion for the Grecian ſtate:
This taſk let Ajax or Tydides prove,
Or he, the king of kings, belov'd of Jove. POPE.

[b] *The ties of faith, the ſworn alliance broke,*
Our impious battles the juſt gods provoke. POPE.

And indeed Homer hardly ever makes his heroes ſucceed (as his excellent tranſlator juſtly obſerves) unleſs they have firſt offered a prayer to heaven. "He is perpetually, ſays Mr. Pope, acknowledging "the hand of God in all events, and aſcribing to that alone all the victories, triumphs, rewards, or puniſhments of men. "The grand moral laid down at the entrance of his poem, Διος δ' ετελειετο βυλη, "*The will of God was fulfilled*, runs through "his whole work, and is, with a moſt remarkable care and conduct, put into the "mouths of his greateſt and wiſeſt perſons "on every occaſion."

Upon the whole, Clytander, we may ſafely aſſert, that the belief of a particular providence is founded upon ſuch probable reaſons as may well juſtify our aſſent. It would ſcarce therefore be wiſe to renounce an opinion, which affords ſo firm a ſupport to the ſoul in thoſe ſeaſons wherein ſhe ſtands moſt in need of aſſiſtance, merely becauſe it is not poſſible, in queſtions of this kind, to ſolve every difficulty which attends them. If it be highly conſonant to our general notions

of the benovelence of the Deity (as highly conſonant it ſurely is) that he ſhould not leave ſo impotent a creature as man, to the ſingle guidance of his own precarious faculties; who would abandon a belief ſo full of the moſt enlivening conſolation, in compliance with thoſe metaphyſical reaſonings which are uſually calculated rather to ſilence, than to ſatisfy, an humble enquirer after truth? Who indeed would wiſh to be convinced, that he ſtands unguarded by that heavenly ſhield, which can protect him againſt all the aſſaults of an injurious and malevolent world? The truth is, the belief of a particular providence is the moſt animating perſuaſion that the mind of man can embrace: it gives ſtrength to our hopes, and firmneſs to our reſolutions; it ſubdues the inſolence of proſperity, and draws out the ſting of affliction. In a word, it is like the golden branch to which Virgil's hero was directed, and affords the only ſecure paſſport thro the regions of darkneſs and ſorrow. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER IX.

To TIMOCLEA.

July 23, 1748.

IT is with wonderful ſatisfaction I find you are grown ſuch an adept in the occult arts, and that you take a laudable pleaſure in the antient and ingenious ſtudy of making and ſolving Riddles. It is a ſcience, undoubtedly, of moſt neceſſary acquirement, and deſerves to make a part in the education of both ſexes. Thoſe of yours may by this means very innocently indulge their uſual curioſity of diſcovering and diſcloſing a ſecret; whilſt ſuch amongſt ours who have a turn for deep ſpeculations, and are fond of puzzling themſelves and others, may exerciſe their faculties this way with much private ſatisfaction, and without the leaſt diſturbance to the public. It is an art indeed, which I would recommend to the encouragement of both the univerſities, as it affords the eaſieſt and ſhorteſt method of conveying ſome of the moſt uſeful principles of logic, and might therefore be introduced as a very proper

ſubſtitute in the room of thoſe dry ſyſtems, which are at preſent in vogue in thoſe places of education. For, as it conſiſts in diſcovering truth under borrowed appearances, it might prove of wonderful advantage in every branch of learning, by habituating the mind to ſeparate all foreign ideas, and conſequently preſerving it from that grand ſource of error, the being deceived by falſe connections. In ſhort, Timoclea, this your favorite ſcience contains the ſum of all human policy; and as there is no paſſing thro the world without ſometimes mixing with fools and knaves, who would not chooſe to be maſter of the enigmatical art, in order, on proper occaſions, to be able to lead aſide craft and impertinence from their aim, by the convenient artifice of a prudent diſguiſe? It was the maxim of a very wiſe prince, that "he "who knows not how to diſſemble, knows "not how to reign:" and I deſire you would receive it as mine, that "he who "knows not how to riddle, knows not how "to live."

But beſides the general uſefulneſs of this art, it will have a further recommendation

dation to all true admirers of antiquity, as being practiſed by the moſt conſiderable perſonages of early times. It is almoſt three thouſand years ago ſince Samſon propoſed his famous riddle ſo well known; tho the advocates for antient learning muſt forgive me, if in this article I attribute the ſuperiority to the moderns: for if we may judge of the ſkill of the former in this profound art by that remarkable ſpecimen of it, the geniuſes of thoſe early ages were by no means equal to thoſe which our times have produced. But as a friend of mine has lately finiſhed, and intends very ſhortly to publiſh, a moſt curious work in folio, wherein he has fully proved that important point, I will not anticipate the pleaſure you will receive by peruſing his ingenious performance. In the mean while let it be remembred to the immortal glory of this art, that the wiſeſt man, as well as the greateſt prince that ever lived, is ſaid to have amuſed himſelf and a neighbouring monarch in trying the ſtrength of each other's talents in this way; ſeveral riddles, it ſeems having paſſed between Solomon and Hiram, upon condition that he who

failed in the ſolution ſhould incur a certain penalty. It is recorded likewiſe of the great father of poetry, even the divine Homer himſelf, that he had a taſte of this ſort; and we are told by a Greek writer of his life, that he died with vexation for not being able to diſcover a riddle, which was propoſed to him by ſome fiſhermen at a certain iſland called Iö.

I AM inclined to think, indeed, that the antients in general were ſuch admirers of this art, as to inſcribe riddles upon their tomb-ſtones, and that not ſatisfied with puzzling the world in their life-time, they bequeathed enigmatical legacies to the public after their deceaſe. My conjecture is founded upon an antient inſcription, which I will venture to quote to you, tho it is in Latin, as your friend and neighbor the antiquarian will, I am perſuaded, be very glad of obliging you with a diſſertation upon it. Be pleaſed then to aſk him, whether he does not think that the following inſcription favors my ſentiments:

VIATORES. OPTIMI.
HIS. NVGIS. GRYPHIS. AMBAGIBVSQVE.
MEIS. CONDONARE. POSCIMUS.

However

However this may be, it is certain that it was one of the great entertaintments of the paſtoral life, and therefore, if for no other reaſon, highly deſerving the attention of our modern Arcadians. You remember, I dare ſay, the riddle which the ſhepherd Dametas propoſes to Mænalcas in Dryden's Virgil:

Say where the round of heav'n, which all contains,
To three ſhort ells on earth our ſight reſtrains:
Tell That, and riſe a Phœbus for thy pains.

This ænigma, which has exerciſed the gueſſes of many a learned critic, remains yet unexplained: which I mention, not only as an inſtance of the wonderful penetration which is neceſſary to render a man a complete adept in this moſt noble ſcience, but as an incitement to you to employ your ſkill in attempting the ſolution.—And now, Timoclea, what will your grave friend ſay, who reproached you, it ſeems, for your riddling genius, when he ſhall find you are thus able to defend your favorite ſtudy by the lofty examples of kings, commentators, and poets? I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER X.

To PHIDIPPUS.

HARDLY, I imagine, were you in earneſt, when you required my thoughts upon friendſhip: for, to give you the trueſt idea of that generous intercourſe, may I not juſtly refer you back to the ſentiments of your own heart? I am ſure, at leaſt, I have learned to improve my own notions of that refined affection, by thoſe inſtances which I have obſerved in yourſelf; as it is from thence I have received the cleareſt conviction, that it derives all its ſtrength and ſtability from virtue and good-ſenſe.

THERE is not, perhaps, a quality more uncommon in the world, than that which is neceſſary to form a man for this refined commerce: for however ſociableneſs may be eſteemed a juſt characteriſtic of our ſpecies; *friendlineſs*, I am perſuaded, will ſcarce be found to enter into its general definition. The qualifications requiſite to ſupport and conduct friendſhip in all its ſtrength and extent, do not ſeem to be ſufficiently diffuſed among the human race,

to

to render them the diſtinguiſhing marks of mankind; unleſs generoſity and good-ſenſe ſhould be allowed (what they never can be allowed) univerſally to prevail. On the contrary, how few are in poſſeſſion of thoſe moſt amiable of endowments? how few are capable of that noble elevation of mind, which raiſes a man above thoſe little jealouſies and rivalſhips that ſhoot up in the paths of common amities?

We ſhould not, indeed, ſo often hear complaints of the inconſtancy and falſeneſs of friends, if the world in general were more cautious than they uſually are, in forming connections of this kind. But the misfortune is, our friendſhips are apt to be too *forward*, and thus either fall off in the bloſſom, or never arrive at juſt maturity. It is an excellent piece of adviſe therefore, that the poet Martial gives upon this occaſion:

Tu tantum inſpice qui novus *paratur,*
An poſſit fieri vetus *ſodalis.*

Were I to make trial of any perſon's qualifications for an union of ſo much delicacy, there is no part of his conduct I would

would ſooner ſingle out, than to obſerve him in his reſentments. And this, not upon the maxim frequently advanced, "that the beſt friends make the bittereſt "enemies;" but, on the contrary, becauſe I am perſuaded, that he who is capable of being a bitter enemy, can never poſſeſs the neceſſary virtues that conſtitute a true friend. For muſt he not want generoſity (that moſt eſſential principle of an amicable combination) who can be ſo mean as to indulge a ſpirit of *ſettled* revenge, and coolly triumph in the oppreſſion of an adverſary? Accordingly there is no circumſtance in the character of the excellent Agricola, that gives me a higher notion of the true heroiſm of his mind, than what the hiſtorian of his life mentions concerning his conduct in this particular inſtance. *Ex Iracundia* (ſays Tacitus) *nihil ſupererat: ſecretum et ſilentium ejus non timeres.* His elevated ſpirit was too great to ſuffer his reſentment to ſurvive the occaſion of it; and thoſe who provoked his indignation had nothing to apprehend from the *ſecret* and ſilent workings of unextinguiſhed malice. But the practice, it muſt be owned (perhaps

haps I might have ſaid, the principle too) of the world runs ſtrongly on the ſide of the contrary diſpoſition; and thus, in oppoſition to that generous ſentiment of your admired orator, which I have ſo often heard you quote with applauſe, our friendſhips are mortal, whilſt it is our enmities only that never die.

But though judgment muſt collect the materials of this goodly ſtructure, it is affection that gives the cement; and paſſion as well as reaſon ſhould concur in forming a firm and laſting coalition. Hence, perhaps, it is, that not only the moſt powerful but the moſt laſting friendſhips, are uſually the produce of the early ſeaſon of our lives, when we are moſt ſuſceptible of the warm and affectionate impreſſions. The connections, into which we enter in any after-period, decreaſe in ſtrength as our paſſions abate in heat; and there is not, I believe, a ſingle inſtance of a vigorous friendſhip that ever ſtruck root in a boſom chilled by years. How irretrievable then is the loſs of thoſe beſt and faireſt acquiſitions of our youth? Seneca, taking notice of Auguſtus Cæſar's lamenting, upon a cer-

a certain occaſion, the death of Mæcenas and Agrippa, obſerves, that he, who could inſtantly repair the deſtruction of whole fleets and armies, and bid Rome, after a general conflagation, riſe out of her aſhes even with more luſtre than before; was yet unable, during a whole life, to fill up thoſe laſting vacancies in his friendſhip: A reflection, which reminds me of renewing my ſolicitations, that you would be more cautious in hazarding a life which I have ſo many reaſons to love and honor. For whenever an accident of the ſame kind ſhall ſeparate (and what other accident can ſeparate) the happy union which has ſo long ſubſiſted between us; where ſhall I retrieve ſo ſevere a loſs? I am utterly indiſpoſed to enter into new habitudes and extend the little circle of my friendſhips: happy if I may but preſerve it firm and unbroken to the cloſing moment of my life! Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XI.

To HORTENSIUS.

Auguſt 12, 1742.

IF any thing could tempt me to read the Latin poem you mention, it would be your recommendation. But ſhall I venture to own, that I have no taſte for modern compoſitions of that kind? There is one prejudice which always remains with me againſt them, and which I have never yet found cauſe to renounce: no true genius, I am perſuaded, would ſubmit to write any conſiderable poem in a dead language. A poet who glows with the genuine fire of a warm and lively imagination, will find the copiouſneſs of his own native Engliſh ſcarce ſufficient to convey his ideas in all their ſtrength and energy. The moſt comprehenſive language ſinks under the weight of great conceptions; and a pregnant imagination diſdains to ſtint the natural growth of her thoughts, to the confined ſtandard of claſſical expreſſion. An ordinary genius, indeed, may be humbly contented to purſue words thro indexes and dictionaries,

and

and tamely borrow phraſes from Horace and Virgil; but could the elevated invention of Milton, or the brillant ſenſe of Pope, have inglorioufly ſubmitted to lower the force and majeſty of the moſt exalted and nervous ſentiments, to the ſcanty meaſure of the Roman dialect? For copiouſneſs is by no means in the number of thoſe advantages which attend the Latin language; as many of the antients have both confeſſed and lamented. Thus Lucretius and Seneca complain of its deficiency with reſpect to ſubjects of philoſophy; as Pliny the younger owns he found it incapable of furniſhing him with proper terms, in compoſitions of wit and humor. But if the Romans themſelves found their language thus penurious, in its entire and moſt ample ſupplies; how much more contracted muſt it be to us, who are only in poſſeſſion of its broken and ſcattered remains?

To ſay truth, I have obſerved in moſt of the modern Latin poems which I have accidentally run over, a remarkable barrenneſs of ſentiment, and have generally found the poet degraded into the parodiſt. It is uſually the little dealers on Parnaſſus, who

who have not a ſufficient ſtock of genius to launch out into a more enlarged commerce with the Muſes, that hawk about theſe claſſical gleanings. The ſtyle of theſe performances always puts me in mind of Harlequin's ſnuff, which he collected by borrowing a pinch out of every man's box he could meet, and then retailed it to his cuſtomers under the pompous title of *tabac de mille fleurs*. Half a line from Virgil or Lucretius, pieced out with a bit from Horace or Juvenal, is generally the motly mixture which enters into compoſitions of this ſort. One may apply to theſe jack-daw poets with their ſtolen feathers, what Martial ſays to a contemporary plagiariſt:

Stat contra dicitque tibi tua pagina. Fur es.

This kind of theft, indeed, every man muſt neceſſarily commit, who ſets up for a poet in a dead language. For to expreſs himſelf with propriety, he muſt not only be ſure that every *ſingle* word which he uſes, is authorized by the beſt writers; but he muſt not even venture to throw them out of that particular combination in which he finds them connected: otherwiſe he may run into the moſt barbarous ſoleciſms. To

explain my meaning by an inſtance from modern language: the French words *arene* and *rive*, are both to be met with in their approved authors; and yet if a foreigner, unacquainted with the niceties of that language, ſhould take the liberty of bringing thoſe two words together as in the following verſe,

Sur la rive du fleuve amaſſant de l'arene;

he would be expoſed to the ridicule, not only of the critics, but of the moſt ordinary mechanic in Paris. For the idiom of the French tongue will not admit of the expreſſion *ſur la rive du fleuve*, but requires the phraſe *ſur le bord de la riviere*; as they never ſay *amaſſer de l'arene*, but *du ſable*. The ſame obſervation may be extended to all languages whether living or dead. But as no reaſonings from analogy, can be of the leaſt force in determining the idiomatic proprieties of any language whatſoever; a modern Latin poet has no other method of being ſure of avoiding abſurdities of this kind, then to take whole phraſes as he finds them formed to his hands. Thus inſtead of accommodating his expreſſion to his ſentiment (if any he ſhould have) he muſt neceſſarily bend his ſentiment to his expreſſion,

ſion, as he is not at liberty to ſtrike out into that boldneſs of ſtyle, and thoſe unexpected combinations of words, which give ſuch grace and energy to the thoughts of every true genius. True genius, indeed, is as much diſcovered by ſtyle, as by any other diſtinction; and every eminent writer, without indulging any unwarranted licences, has a language which he derives from himſelf, and which is peculiarly and literally his own.

I WOULD recommend therefore to theſe empty echoes of the antients, which owe their voice to the ruins of Rome, the advice of an old philoſopher to an affected orator of his times: *Vive moribus præteritis*, ſaid he, *loquere verbis præſentibus*. Let theſe poets form their conduct, if they pleaſe, by the manners of the antients; but if they would prove their genius, it muſt be by the language of the moderns. I would not however have you imagine, that I exclude all merit from a qualification of this kind. To be ſkilled in the mechaniſm of Latin verſe, is a talent, I confeſs, extremely worthy of a pedagogue; as it is an exerciſe of ſingular advantage to his pupils. Adieu, I am, &c.

LETTER XII.

To AMASIA.

July 8, 1744.

IF good manners will not juſtify my long ſilence, policy at leaſt will: and you muſt confeſs, there is ſome prudence in not owning a debt one is incapable of paying. I have the mortification indeed to find myſelf engaged in a commerce, which I have not a ſufficient fund to ſupport, tho' I muſt add at the ſame time, if you expect an equal return of entertainment for that which your letters afford, I know not where you will find a correſpondent. You will ſcarcely at leaſt look for him in the deſart, or hope for any thing very lively from a man who is obliged to ſeek his companions among the dead. You who dwell in a land flowing with mirth and good humor, meet with many a gallant occurrence worthy of record: but what can a village produce, which is more famous for repoſe than for action, and is ſo much behind the manners of the preſent age, as ſcarce to have got out of the ſimplicity of the firſt? The utmoſt of our humor

humor riſes no higher than punch; and all that we know of Aſſemblies, is once a year round our May-pole. Thus unqualified, as I am, to contribute to *your* amuſement, I am as much at a loſs to ſupply my *own*; and am obliged to have recourſe to a thouſand ſtratagems to help me off with thoſe lingering hours, which run ſo ſwiftly, it ſeems, by you. As one cannot always, you know, be playing at puſh-pin, I ſometimes employ myſelf with a leſs philoſophical diverſion; and either purſue butterflies, or hunt rhymes, as the weather and the ſeaſons permit. This morning not proving very favorable to my ſports of the field, I contented myſelf with thoſe under covert; and as I am not at preſent ſupplied with any thing better for your entertainment, will you ſuffer me to ſet before you ſome of my game?

A TALE.

ERE Saturn's ſons were yet diſgrac'd,
And heathen gods were all the taſte,
Full oft (we read) 'twas Jove's high will
To take the air on Ida's hill.
It chanc'd, as once with ſerious ken
He view'd from thence the ways of men,

He ſaw (and pity touch'd his breaſt)
The world by three foul fiends poſſeſt.
Pale *Diſcord* there, and *Folly* vain,
With haggard *Vice*, upheld their reign.
Then forth he ſent his ſummons high,
And call'd a ſenate of the ſky.
Round as the winged orders preſt,
Jove thus his ſacred mind expreſt:
" Say, which of all this ſhining train
" Will *Virtue's* conflict hard ſuſtain?
" For ſee! ſhe drooping takes her flight,
" While not a god ſupports her right."
He paus'd — when from amidſt the ſky,
Wit, *Innocence*, and *Harmony*,
With one united zeal aroſe,
The triple tyrants to oppoſe,
That inſtant from the realms of day,
With gen'rous ſpeed, they took their way:
To Britain's iſle direct their car,
And enter'd with the ev'ning ſtar.
BESIDE the road a manſion ſtood,
Defended by a circling wood.
Hither, diſguis'd, their ſteps they bend,
In hopes, perchance, to find a friend.
Nor vain their hope; for records ſay
Worth ne'er from thence was turn'd away.
They urge the trav'ler's common chance,
And ev'ry piteous plea advance.

The

The artful tale that *Wit* had feign'd,
Admittance eaſy ſoon obtain'd.
THE dame who own'd, adorn'd the place;
Three blooming daughters added grace.
The firſt, with gentleſt manners bleſt
And temper ſweet, each heart poſſeſt;
Who view'd her, catch'd the tender flame:
And ſoft Amaſia was her name.
In ſprightly ſenſe and poliſh'd air,
What maid with Mira might compare?
While Lucia's eyes, and Lucia's lyre,
Did unreſiſted love inſpire.
IMAGINE now the table clear,
And mirth in ev'ry face appear:
The ſong, the tale, the jeſt went round,
The riddle dark, the trick profound.
Thus each admiring and admir'd,
The hoſts and gueſts at length retir'd;
When *Wit* thus ſpake her ſiſter-train:
" Faith, friends, our errand is but vain—
" Quick let us meaſure back the ſky;
" Theſe nymphs alone may well ſupply
" *Wit*, *Innocence*, and *Harmony*.

YOU ſee to what expedient ſolitude has reduced me, when I am thus forced to ſtring rhymes, as boys do birds eggs, in or-

der to while away my idle hours. But a gayer ſcene is, I truſt, approaching, and the day will ſhortly, I hope, arrive, when I ſhall only complain that it ſteals away too faſt. It is not from any improvement in the objects which ſurround me, that I expect this wondrous change; nor yet that a longer familiarity will render them more agreable. It is from a promiſe I received, that Amaſia will viſit the hermit in his cell, and diſperſe the gloom of a ſolitaire by the chearfulneſs of her converſation. What inducements ſhall I mention to prevail with you to haſten that day? ſhall I tell you, that I have a bower over-arched with jeſſamine? that I have an oak which is the favorite haunt of a dryad? that I have a plantation, which flouriſhes with all the verdure of May, in the midſt of all the cold of December? Or, may I not hope that I have ſomething ſtill more prevailingwith you than all theſe, as I can with truth aſſure you, that I have a heart which is faithfully yours, &c.

LETTER XIII.

To PHILOTES.

AMONG all the advantages which attend friendſhip, there is not one more valuable than the liberty it admits in laying open the various affections of one's mind, without reſerve or diſguiſe. There is ſomething in diſcloſing to a friend the occaſional emotions of one's heart, that wonderfully contributes to ſooth and allay its perturbations, in all its moſt penſive or anxious moments. Nature, indeed, ſeems to have *caſt* us with a general diſpoſition to communication: though at the ſame time it muſt be acknowledged, there are few to whom one may ſafely be communicative. Have I not reaſon, then, to eſteem it as one of the moſt deſirable circumſtances of my life, that I dare, without ſcruple, or danger, *think aloud* to Philotes? It is merely to exerciſe that happy privilege, I now take up my pen; and you muſt expect nothing in this letter but the picture of my heart in one of its ſplenetic hours. There are certain ſeaſons, perhaps, in every man's life, when he is diſſatisfied with

with himſelf and every thing around him, without being able to give a ſubſtantial reaſon for being ſo. At leaſt I am unwilling to think, that this dark cloud, which at preſent hangs over my mind, is peculiar to my conſtitution, and never gathers in any breaſt but my own. It is much more, however, my concern to diſſipate this vapor in myſelf, than to diſcover that it ſometimes ariſes in others: as there is no diſpoſition a man would rather endeavor to cheriſh, than a conſtant aptitude of being pleaſed. But my practice will not always credit my philoſophy; and I find it much eaſier to point out my diſtemper than to remove it. After all, is it not a mortifying conſideration, that the powers of reaſon ſhould be leſs prevalent than thoſe of matter; and that a page of Seneca cannot raiſe the ſpirits, when a pint of claret will? It might, methinks, ſomewhat abate the inſolence of human pride to conſider, that it is but increaſing or diminiſhing the velocity of certain fluids in the animal machine, to elate the ſoul with the gayeſt hopes, or ſink her into the deepeſt deſpair; to depreſs the hero into a coward, or advance the coward into a hero. It is to

ſome

ſome ſuch mechanical cauſe I am inclined to attribute the preſent gloomineſs of my mind: at the ſame time I will confeſs, there is ſomething in that very conſideration which gives ſtrength to the fit, and renders it ſo much the more difficult to throw off. For, tell me, is it not a diſcouraging reflection to find one's ſelf *ſervile* (as Shakeſpear expreſſes it) *to every ſkyey influence*, and the ſport of every paltry atom? to owe the eaſe of one's mind not only to the diſpoſition of one's own body, but almoſt to that of every other which ſurrounds us? Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XIV.

To ORONTES.

THE paſſage you quote is entirely in my ſentiments. I agree both with that celebrated author and yourſelf, that our Oratory is by no means in a ſtate of perfection. and, tho it has much ſtrength and ſolidity, that it may yet be rendered far more poliſhed and affecting. The growth, indeed, of eloquence, even in thoſe countries where ſhe flouriſhed moſt, has ever been exceedingly

ingly ſlow. Athens had been in poſſeſſion of all the other polite improvements, long before her pretenſions to the perſuaſive arts were in any degree conſiderable; as the earlieſt orator of note among the Romans did not appear ſooner than about a century before Tully.

THAT great maſter of perſuaſion, taking notice of this remarkable circumſtance, aſſigns it as an evidence of the ſuperior difficulty of his favorite art. Poſſibly there may be ſome truth in the obſervation: but whatever the cauſe be, the fact, I believe, is undeniable. Accordingly eloquence has by no means made equal advances in our own country, with her ſiſter arts; and tho we have ſeen ſome excellent poets, and a few good painters riſe up amongſt us, yet I know not whether our nation can ſupply us with a ſingle Orator of deſerved eminence. One cannot but be ſurpriſed at this, when it is conſidered, that we have a profeſſion ſet apart for the purpoſes of perſuaſion; and which not only affords the moſt animating and intereſting topics of rhetoric, but wherein a talent of this kind would prove the likelieſt, perhaps, of any other to obtain thoſe ambitious prizes which were thought

thought to contribute ſo much to the ſucceſsful progreſs of antient eloquence.

Among the principal defects of our Engliſh orators, their general diſregard of harmony has, I think, been the leaſt obſerved. It would be injuſtice indeed to deny that we have ſome performances of this kind amongſt us, tolerably muſical: but it muſt be acknowledged at the ſame time, that it is more the effect of accident than deſign, and rather a proof of the power of our language, than of the art of our orators.

Dr. Tillotſon, who is frequently mentioned as having carried this ſpecies of eloquence to its higheſt perfection, ſeems to have had no ſort of notion of rhetorical numbers: and may I venture, Orontes, to add, without hazarding the imputation of an affected ſingularity, that I think no man had ever leſs pretenſions to genuine oratory, than this celebrated preacher. If any thing could raiſe a flame of eloquence in the breaſt of an orator, there is no occaſion, upon which one ſhould imagine, it would be more likely to break out, than in celebrating departed merit: yet the two ſermons which he preached upon the death of

Dr. Gooch and Dr. Whitchot are as cold and languid performances as were ever, perhaps, produced upon ſuch an animating ſubject. One cannot indeed but regret, that he, who abounds with ſuch noble and generous ſentiments, ſhould want the art of ſetting them off with all the advantage they deſerve; that the ſublime in morals ſhould not be attended with a ſuitable elevation of language. The truth however is, his words are frequently ill choſen, and almoſt always ill placed; his periods are both tedious and unharmonious; as his metaphors are generally mean, and often ridiculous. It were eaſy to produce numberleſs inſtances in ſupport of this aſſertion. Thus in his ſermon preached before Queen Anne, when ſhe was Princeſs of Denmark, he talks of *ſqueezing* a parable, *thruſting* religion *by*, *driving* a ſtrict *bargain* with God, *ſharking ſhifts*, &c. and ſpeaking of the day of judgment, he deſcribes the world as *cracking about our ears*. I cannot however but acknowledge, in juſtice to the oratorical character of this moſt valuable prelate, that there is a noble ſimplicity in ſome few of his

his ſermons; as his excellent diſcourſe on *ſincerity* deſerves to be mentioned with particular applauſe.

But to ſhew his deficiency in the article I am conſidering at preſent, the following ſtricture will be ſufficient, among many others that might be cited to the ſame purpoſe. "One might be apt," ſays he, "to "think at firſt view, that this parable was "*over done*, and wanted ſomething of a due "decorum; it being hardly credible, that "a man, after he had been ſo mercifully "and generouſly dealt *withal*, as upon his "humble requeſt to have ſo *huge* a debt ſo "freely forgiven, ſhould, whilſt the me-"mory of ſo much mercy was freſh upon "him, even in the very next moment, "*handle* his fellow-ſervant, who had made "the ſame humble requeſt to him which "he had *done* to his lord, with ſo much "roughneſs and cruelty, for ſo inconſider-"able a ſum."

This whole period (not to mention other objections which might juſtly be raiſed againſt it) is unmuſical throughout; but the concluding members, which ought to have been particularly flowing, are moſt miſerably looſe and disjointed. If the de-

licacy of Tully's ear was ſo exquiſitely refined, as not always to be ſatisfied even when he read Demoſthenes; how would it have been offended at the harſhneſs and diſſonance of ſo unharmonious a ſentence?

NOTHING, perhaps, throws our eloquence at a greater diſtance from that of the antients, than this Gothic arrangement; as thoſe wonderful effects, which ſometimes attended their elocution, were, in all probability, chiefly owing to their ſkill in muſical concords. It was by the charm of numbers, united with the ſtrength of reaſon, that Tully confounded the audacious Catiline, and ſilenced the eloquent Hortenſius. It was this that deprived Curio of all power of recollection, when he roſe up to oppoſe that great maſter of enchanting rhetoric: it was this, in a word, made even Cæſar himſelf tremble; nay, what is yet more extraordinary, made Cæſar alter his determined purpoſe, and acquit the man he had reſolved to condemn.

YOU will not ſuſpect that I attribute too much to the power of numerous compoſition, when you recollect the inſtance which Tully produces of its wonderful effect. He informs us, you may remember, in one of his

his rhetorical treatiſes, that he was himſelf a witneſs of its influence as Carbo was once haranguing to the people. When that orator pronounced the following ſentence, *patris dictum ſapiens, temeritas filii cōmprŏbāvĭt*, it was aſtoniſhing, ſays he, to obſerve the general applauſe which followed that harmonious cloſe. A modern ear, perhaps, would not be much affected upon this occaſion; and, indeed, it is more than probable, that we are ignorant of the art of pronouncing that period with its genuine emphaſis and cadence. We are certain, however, that the muſic of it conſiſted in the *dichoree* with which it is terminated: for Cicero himſelf aſſures us, that if the final meaſure had been changed, and the words placed in a different order, their whole effect would have been abſolutely deſtroyed.

THIS art was firſt introduced among the Greeks by Thraſymachus, tho ſome of the admirers of Iſocrates attributed the invention to that orator. It does not appear to have been obſerved by the Romans till near the times of Tully, and even then it was by no means univerſally received. The antient

and leſs numerous manner of compoſition, had ſtill many admirers, who were ſuch enthuſiaſts to antiquity as to adopt her very defects. A diſpoſition of the ſame kind may, perhaps, prevent its being received with us; and while the archbiſhop ſhall maintain his authority as an orator, it is not to be expected that any great advancement will be made in this ſpecies of eloquence. That ſtrength of underſtanding likewiſe, and ſolidity of reaſon, which is ſo eminently our national characteriſtic, may add ſomewhat to the difficulty of reconciling us to a ſtudy of this kind; as at firſt glance it may ſeem to lead an orator from his grand and principal aim, and tempt him to make a ſacrifice of ſenſe to ſound. It muſt be acknowledged, indeed, that in the times which ſucceeded the diſſolution of the Roman republic, this art was ſo perverted from its true end as to become the ſingle ſtudy of their enervated orators. Pliny the younger often complains of this contemptible affectation; and the polite author of that elegant dialogue which, with very little probability, is attributed either to Tacitus or Quinctilian, aſſures us it was the ridiculous boaſt of certain orators in the time

of

of the declenſion of genuine eloquence, that their harangues were capable of being ſet to muſic, and ſung upon the ſtage. But it muſt be remembered, that the true end of this art I am recommending, is to aid, not to ſuperſede reaſon; that it is ſo far from being neceſſarily effeminate, that it not only adds grace but ſtrength to the powers of perſuaſion. For this purpoſe Tully and Quinctilian, thoſe great maſters of numerous compoſition, have laid it down as a fixed and invariable rule, that it muſt never appear the effect of labor in the orator; that the tuneful flow of his periods muſt always ſeem the caſual reſult of their diſpoſition; and that it is the higheſt offence againſt the art, to weaken the expreſſion, in order to give a more muſical tone to the cadence. In ſhort, that no unmeaning words are to be thrown in merely to fill up the requiſite meaſure, but that they muſt ſtill riſe in ſenſe as they improve in ſound. I am, &c.

LETTER XV.

To CLEORA.

Auguſt 11, 1738.

THO it is but a few hours ſince I parted from my Cleora; yet I have already, you ſee, taken up my pen to write to her. You muſt not expect, however, in this, or in any of my future letters, that I ſay fine things to you; ſince I only intend to tell you true ones. My heart is too full to be regular, and too ſincere to be ceremonious. I have changed the manner, not the ſtyle of my former converſations: and I write to you, as I uſed to talk to you, without form or art. Tell me then, with the ſame undiſſembled ſincerity, what effect this abſence has upon your uſual chearfulneſs? as I will honeſtly confeſs on my own part, that I am too intereſted to wiſh a circumſtance, ſo little conſiſtent with my own repoſe, ſhould be altogether reconcileable to yours. I have attempted, however, to purſue your advice, and divert myſelf by the ſubject you recommended to my thoughts: but it is impoſſible, I perceive, to turn off the

the mind at once from an object, which it has long dwelt upon with pleaſure. My heart, like a poor bird which is hunted from her neſt, is ſtill returning to the place of its affections, and after ſome vain efforts to fly off, ſettles again where all its cares and all its tenderneſs are centered. Adieu.

LETTER XVI.

To PHILOTES.

Auguſt 20, 1739.

I FEAR I ſhall loſe all my credit with you as a gardener, by this ſpecimen which I venture to ſend you of the produce of my walls. The ſnails, indeed, have had more than their ſhare of my peaches and nectarines this ſeaſon: but will you not ſmile when I tell you, that I deem it a ſort of cruelty to ſuffer them to be deſtroyed? I ſhould ſcarce dare to acknowledge this weakneſs (as the generality of the world, no doubt, would call it) had I not experienced, by many agreable inſtances, that I may ſafely lay open to you every ſentiment of my heart. To confeſs the truth then,

I have ſome ſcruples with reſpect to the liberty we aſſume in the *unlimited* deſtruction of theſe lower orders of exiſtence. I know not upon what principle of reaſon and juſtice it is, that mankind have founded their right over the lives of every creature that is placed in a ſubordinate rank of being to themſelves. Whatever claim they may have in right of food and ſelf-defence, did they extend their privilege no farther than thoſe articles would reaſonably carry them, numberleſs beings might enjoy their lives in peace, who are now hurried out of them by the moſt wanton and unneceſſary cruelties. I cannot, indeed, diſcover why it ſhould be thought leſs inhumane to cruſh to death a harmleſs inſect, whoſe ſingle offence is that he eats that food which nature has prepared for his ſuſtenance; than it would be, were I to kill any more bulky creature for the ſame reaſon. There are few tempers ſo hardened to the impreſſions of humanity, as not to ſhudder at the thought of the latter; and yet the former is univerſally paactiſed without the leaſt check of compaſſion. This ſeems to ariſe from the groſs error of ſuppoſing, that every creature is really in itſelf con-

contemptible, which happens to be cloathed with a body infinitely diſproportionate to our own; not conſidering that *great* and *little* are merely relative terms. But the inimitable Shakeſpear would teach us, that

the poor beetle, that we tread upon,
In corp'ral ſuff'rance feels a pang as great
As when a giant dies.

And this is not thrown out in the latitude of poetical imagination, but ſupported by the diſcoveries of the moſt improved philoſophy: for there is every reaſon to believe that the ſenſations of many inſects are as exquiſite as thoſe of creatures of far more enlarged dimenſions; perhaps even more ſo. The Millepedes, for inſtance, rolls itſelf round, upon the ſlighteſt touch; and the ſnail gathers in her horns upon the leaſt approach of your hand. Are not theſe the ſtrongeſt indications of *their* ſenſibility? and is it any evidence of *ours*, that we are not therefore induced to treat them with a more ſympathizing tenderneſs?

I was extremely pleaſed with a ſentiment I met with the other day in honeſt Montaigne. That good-natured author remarks, that there is a certain general claim of kindneſs

and benevolence which every ſpecies of creatures has a right to from us. It is to be regretted that this generous maxim is not more attended to, in the affair of education, and preſſed home upon tender minds in its full extent and latitude. I am far, indeed, from thinking that the early delight which children diſcover in tormenting flies, &c. is a mark of any *innate* cruelty of temper; becauſe this turn may be accounted for upon other principles, and it is entertaining unworthy notions of the Deity to ſuppoſe he forms mankind with a propenſity to the moſt deteſtable of all diſpoſitions. But moſt certainly, by being unreſtrained in ſports of this kind, they may acquire by habit, what they never would have learned from nature, and grow up into a confirmed inattention to every kind of ſuffering but their own. Accordingly the ſupreme court of judicature at Athens thought an inſtance of this ſort not below its cognizance, and puniſhed a boy for putting out the eyes of a poor bird, that had unhappily fallen into his hands.

IT might be of ſervice therefore, it ſhould ſeem, in order to awaken as early

as

as poſſible in children an extenſive ſenſe of humanity, to give them a view of ſeveral ſorts of inſects as they may be magnified by the aſſiſtance of glaſſes, and to ſhew them that the ſame evident marks of wiſdom and goodneſs prevail in the formation of the minuteſt inſect, as in that of the moſt enormous Leviathan: that they are equally furniſhedwith whatever is neceſſary not only to the preſervation but the happineſs of their beings in that claſs of exiſtence to which Providence has aſſigned them: in a word, that the whole conſtruction of their reſpective organs diſtinctly proclaims them the objects of the divine benevolence, and therefore that they juſtly ought to be ſo of ours. I am, &c.

LETTER XVII.

To the ſame.

Feb. 1, 1738.

You ſee how much I truſt to your good-nature and your judgment whilſt I am the only perſon, perhaps, among your friends, who have ventured to omit a congra-

congratulation in form. I am not, however, intentionally guilty; for I really deſigned you a viſit before now: but hearing that your acquaintance flowed in upon you from all quarters, I thought it would be more agreeable to you, as well as to myſelf, if I waited till the inundation was abated. But if I have not joined in the general voice of congratulation; I have not, however, omitted the ſincere, tho ſilent wiſhes, which the warmeſt friendſhip can ſuggeſt to a heart entirely in your intereſts. Had I not long ſince forſaken the regions of poetry, I would tell you, in the language of that country, how often I have ſaid, may

all heav'n,
And happy conſtellations on that hour
Shed their ſeleƈteſt influence! MILT.

But plain proſe will do as well for plain truth; and there is no occaſion for any art to perſuade you, that you have upon every occurrence of your life, my beſt good wiſhes. I hope ſhortly to have an opportunity of making myſelf better known to Aſpaſia. When I am ſo, I ſhall rejoice with her,

on

on the choice ſhe has made of a man, from whom I will undertake to promiſe her all the happineſs, which the ſtate ſhe has entered into can afford. Thus much I do not ſcruple to ſay of her huſband to *you*: the reſt I had rather ſay to *her*. If upon any occaſion you ſhould mention me, let it be in the character which I moſt value myſelf upon, that of your much obliged and very affectionate friend.

LETTER XVIII.

To HORTENSIUS.

July 5, 1739.

I CAN by no means ſubſcribe to the ſentiments of your laſt letter, nor agree with you in thinking, that the love of Fame is a paſſion, which either reaſon or religion condemn. I confeſs, indeed, there are ſome who have repreſented it as inconſiſtent with both; and I remember in particular, the excellent author of *The religion of nature delineated*, has treated it as highly irrational and abſurd. As the paſſage falls in ſo thoroughly with your own turn of thought,

thought, you will have no objection, I imagine, to my quoting it at large; and I give it you, at the ſame time, as a very great authority on your ſide. "In reality (ſays that writer) "the man is not known ever the more to "poſterity, becauſe his name is tranſmitted "to them: *He* doth not live becauſe his "*name* does. When it is ſaid, Julius Cæſar "ſubdued Gaul, conquered Pompey, &c. it "is the ſame thing as to ſay, the conqueror "of Pompey was Julius Cæſar, i. e. Cæ-"ſar and the conqueror of Pompey is the "ſame thing; Cæſar is as much known by "one deſignation as by the other. The "amount then is only this: that the con-"queror of Pompey conquered Pompey; "or ſomebody conquered ſomebody; or "rather, ſince Pompey is as little known "now as Cæſar, *ſomebody* conquered *ſome-"body*. Such a poor buſineſs is this boaſted "immortality! and ſuch is the thing called "Glory among us! To diſcerning men "this fame is mere air, and what they "deſpiſe, if not ſhun."

But ſurely, *'twere to conſider too curiouſly* (as Horatio ſays to Hamlet) *to conſider thus*. For tho fame with poſterity ſhould be,

be, in the ſtrict analyſis of it, no other than what it is here deſcribed, a mere unintereſting propoſition, amounting to nothing more than that *ſomebody* acted meritoriouſly; yet it would not neceſſarily follow, that true philoſophy would baniſh the deſire of it from the human breaſt. For this paſſion may be (as moſt certainly it is) wiſely implanted in our ſpecies, notwithſtanding the correſponding object ſhould in reality be very different from what it appears in imagination. Do not many of our moſt refined and even contemplative pleaſures owe their exiſtence to our miſtakes? It is but extending (I will not ſay, improving) ſome of our ſenſes to a higher degree of acuteneſs than we now poſſeſs them, to make the faireſt views of nature, or the nobleſt productions of art, appear horrid and deformed. To ſee things as they truly and in themſelves are, would not always, perhaps, be of advantage to us in the intellectual world, any more than in the natural. But, after all, who ſhall certainly aſſure us, that the pleaſure of virtuous fame dies with its poſſeſſor, and reaches not to a farther ſcene of exiſtence? There is nothing, it

ſhould

ſhould ſeem, either abſurd or unphiloſophical in ſuppoſing it poſſible at leaſt, that the praiſes of the good and the judicious, *that ſweeteſt muſic to an honeſt ear* in this world, may be echoed back to the manſions of the next: that the poet's deſcription of Fame may be literally true, and tho ſhe walks upon earth, ſhe may yet lift her head into heaven.

But can it be reaſonable to extinguiſh a paſſion which nature has univerſally lighted up in the human breaſt, and which we conſtantly find to burn with moſt ſtrength and brightneſs in the nobleſt and beſt formed boſoms? Accordingly Revelation is ſo far from endeavouring (as you ſuppoſe) to eradicate the ſeed which nature has thus deeply planted, that ſhe rather ſeems, on the contrary, to cheriſh and forward its growth. To be *exalted with honor*, and to be had *in everlaſting remembrance*, are in the number of thoſe encouragements which the Jewiſh diſpenſation offered to the virtuous; as the perſon from whom the ſacred author of the Chriſtian ſyſtem received his birth, is herſelf repreſented as rejoicing that *all generations ſhould call her bleſſed.*

To be convinced of the great advantage of cheriſhing this high regard to poſterity, this noble deſire of an after-life in the breath of others, one need only look back upon the hiſtory of the antient Greeks and Romans. What other principle was it, Hortenſius, wnich produced that exalted ſtrain of virtue in *thoſe* days, that may well ſerve as a model to *theſe?* Was it not the *conſentiens laus bonorum*, the *incorrupta vox bene judicantium* (as Tully calls it) the concurrent approbation of the *good*, the uncorrupted applauſe of the *wiſe*, that animated their moſt generous purſuits?

To confeſs the truth, I have been ever inclined to think it a very dangerous attempt, to endeavour to leſſen the motives of right acting, or to raiſe any ſuſpicion concerning their ſolidity. The tempers and diſpoſitions of mankind are ſo extremely different, that it ſeems neceſſary they ſhould be called into action by a variety of incitements. Thus, while ſome are willing to wed Virtue for her perſonal charms, others are engaged to take her for the ſake of her expected dowry: and ſince her followers and admirers have ſo little to hope from her in preſent,

preſent, it were pity, methinks, to reaſon them out of any imagined advantage in reverſion. Farewel. I am, &c.

LETTER XIX.

To CLEORA.

I THINK, Cleora, you are the trueſt female hermit, I ever knew. At leaſt I do not remember to have met with any among your ſex, of the ſame order with yourſelf; for as to the Religious on the other ſide of the water, I can by no means eſteem them worthy of being ranked in your number. They are a ſort of people who either have ſeen nothing of the world, or too much: and where is the merit of giving up what one is not acquainted with, or what one is weary of? But you are a far more illuſtrious recluſe, who have entered into the world with innocency, and retired from it with good humor. That ſort of life, which makes ſo amiable a figure in the deſcription of poets and philoſophers, and which kings and heroes have profeſſed to aſpire after, Cleora actually enjoys: ſhe lives

lives her own, free from the follies and impertinences, the hurry and diſappointments of falſe purſuits of every kind. How much do I prefer one hour of ſuch ſolitude, to all the glittering, glaring, gaudy days of the ambitious? I ſhall not envy them their gold and their ſilver, their precious jewels, and their changes of raiment, while you permit me to join you and Alexander in your hermitage. I hope to do ſo on Sunday evening, and attend you to the ſiege of Tyre, or the deſerts of Africa, or wherever elſe your hero ſhall lead you. But ſhould I find you in more elevated company, and engaged with the rapturous * * * *, even then, I hope, you will not refuſe to admit me of your party. If I have not yet a proper *goût* for the myſtic writers, perhaps I am not quite incapable of acquiring one; and as I have every thing of the hermit in my compoſition except the enthuſiaſm, it is not impoſſible but I may catch that alſo, by the aſſiſtance of you and * * * *. I deſire you would receive me as a probationer at leaſt, and as one who is willing, if he is worthy, to be initiated into your ſecret doctrines. I think I only want this taſte

and a reliſh of the marvellous, to be wholly in your ſentiments. Poſſibly I may be ſo happy as to attain both in good time: I fancy at leaſt there is a cloſe connection between them, and I ſhall not deſpair of obtaining the one, if I can by any means arrive at the other. But which muſt I endeavor at firſt? ſhall I prepare for the myſtic by commencing with the romance, or would you adviſe me to begin with Malbranch before I undertake Clelia? Suffer me, however, ere I enter the regions of fiction, to bear teſtimony to one conſtant truth, by aſſuring you that I am, &c.

LETTER XX.

To EUPHRONIUS.

October 10, 1742.

I HAVE often mentioned to you the pleaſure I received from Mr. Pope's tranſlation of the Iliad: but my admiration of that inimitable performance has increaſed upon me, ſince you tempted me to compare the copy with the original. To ſay of this noble work, that it is the beſt which

ever

ever appeared of the kind, would be ſpeaking in much lower terms than it deſerves; the world perhaps ſcarce ever before ſaw a truly poetical tranſlation: for, as Denham obſerves,

Such is our pride, our folly, or our fate,
That few, but thoſe who cannot write, tranſlate.

Mr. Pope ſeems, in moſt places, to have been inſpired with the ſame ſublime ſpirit that animates his original; as he often takes fire from a ſingle hint in his author, and blazes out even with a ſtronger and brighter flame of poetry. Thus the character of Therſites, as it ſtands in the Engliſh Iliad, is heightened, I think, with more maſterly ſtrokes of ſatire than appear in the Greek; as many of thoſe ſimiles in Homer, which would appear, perhaps, to a modern eye too naked and unornamented, are painted by Pope in all the beautiful drapery of the moſt graceful metaphor. With what propriety of figure, for inſtance, has he raiſed the following compariſon:

Ευτ' ορεος κορυφησι Νοτος καλεσσεν ομιχλην,
Ποιμεσιν ητι φιλλω, κλεπτη δε τε νυκτος αμεινω,
Τοσσον τις τ' επιλλυσει, οσον τ' επι λααν ιησιν·

Ως αρα των υπο ποσσι κονισαλος ωρνυτ' ακελλης
Ερχομενων. Il. iii. 10.

Thus from his flaggy wings when Eurus ſheds
A night of vapours round the mountain-heads,
Swift-gliding miſts the duſky fields invade;
To thieves more grateful than the midnight ſhade:
While ſcarce the ſwains their feeding flocks ſurvey,
Loſt and confus'd amidſt the thicken'd day:
So wrapt in gath'ring duſt the Grecian train,
A moving cloud, ſwept on and hid the plain.

When Mars, being wounded by Diomed, flies back to heaven, Homer compares him in his paſſage to a dark cloud raiſed by ſummer heats, and driven by the wind.

Οιη δ' εκ νεφεων ερεβεννη φαινεται αηρ,
Καυματος εξ ανεμοιο δυσαεος ορνυμενοιο.
Il. v. 864.

The inimitable tranſlator improves this image, by throwing in ſome circumſtances, which, tho not in the original, are exactly in the ſpirit of Homer:

As vapors, blown by Auſter's ſultry breath,
Pregnant with plagues, and ſhedding ſeeds of death,

Beneath

Beneath the rage of burning Sirius riſe,
Choak the parch'd earth, and blacken all the
ſkies;
In ſuch a cloud the god, from combat driv'n,
High o'er the duſty whirlwind ſcales the heav'n.

THERE is a deſcription in the eighth book, which Euſtathius, it ſeems, eſteemed the moſt beautiful night-piece that could be found in poetry. If I am not greatly miſtaken, however, I can produce a finer: and I am perſuaded even the warmeſt admirer of Homer will allow, the following lines are inferior to the correſponding ones in the tranſlation:

Ως δ' οτ' εν ϐρανῳ αστρα φαεινῳ αμφι σεληνῳ
Φαινετ' αριπρεπεα, οτε τ' επλετο νηνεμος αιθηρ,
Εκ τ' εφανον ϖασαι σκοπιαι και ϖρωονες ακροι,
Και ναπαι· ϐρανοθεν δ' αρ' υπερραγη ασπετος
αιθηρ,
Παντα δε τ' ειδεται αστρα, γεγηθε δε τε φρενα
ϖοιμην. Il. viii. 551.

As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heav'n's clear azure ſpreads her ſacred
light;
When not a breath diſturbs the deep ſerene,
And not a cloud o'ercaſts the ſolemn ſcene,

Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And ſtars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole:
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure ſhed,
And tip with ſilver ev'ry mountain's head;
Then ſhine the vales, the rocks in proſpect riſe,
A flood of glory burſts from all the ſkies;
The conſcious ſwains, rejoicing in the ſight,
Eye the blue vault, and bleſs the uſeful light.

I FEAR the enthuſiaſtic admirers of Homer would look upon me with much indignation, were they to hear me ſpeak of any thing in modern language as equal to the ſtrength and majeſty of that great father of poetry. But the following paſſage having been quoted by a celebrated author of antiquity, as an inſtance of the true Sublime, I will leave it to you to determine whether the tranſlation has not at leaſt as juſt a claim to that character as the original.

Ως δ' οτε χειμαρροι ποταμοι κατ' ορεσφι ρεοντες,
Ες μισγαγκειαν συμβαλλετον οβριμον υδωρ,
Κρηνων εκ μεγαλων, κοιλης εντοσθε καραδρης,
Των δε τε τηλοσε δουπον εν αγρησιν εκλυε ποιμην·
Ως των μισγομενων γενετ' ιαχη τε φοβος τε.

As torrents roll, encreas'd by num'rous rills,
With rage impetuous down their echoing hills,
Ruſh

Ruſh to the vales, and, pour'd along the plain,
Roar thro a thouſand chanels to the main;
The diſtant ſhepherd trembling hears the ſound:
So mix both hoſts, and ſo their cries rebound.

THERE is no antient author more likely to betray an injudicious interpreter into meaneſſes, than Homer; as it requires the utmoſt ſkill and addreſs to preſerve that venerable air of ſimplicity which is one of the characteriſtical marks of that poet, without ſinking the expreſſion or the ſentiment into contempt. Antiquity will furniſh a very ſtrong inſtance of the truth of this obſervation, in a ſingle line which is preſerved to us from a tranſlation of the Iliad by one Labeo, a favorite poet, it ſeems, of Nero; it is quoted by an old ſcholiaſt upon Perſius, and happens to be a verſion of the following paſſage in the fourth book:

Ωμον βιβρωθοις Πριαμον Πριαμοιο τε παιδας.

which Nero's admirable poet rendered literally thus:

Crudum manduces Priamum Priamique piſinnos.

I need not indeed have gone ſo far back for my inſtance: a Labeo of our own nation

would have ſupplied me with one much nearer at hand. Ogilby or Hobbs (I forget which) has tranſlated this very verſe in the ſame ridiculous manner:

And eat up Priam and his children all.

But among many other paſſages of this ſort I obſerved one in the ſame book, which raiſed my curioſity to examine in what manner Mr. Pope had conducted it. Juno, in a general council of the gods, thus accoſts Jupiter:

Αινοτατε Κρονιδη,
Πως εθελεις αλιον θειναι πονον ηδ' ατελεστον
Ιδρωθ', ον ιδρωσα μογῳ; καμετλω δε μοι ιπποι
Λαον αγειρουσῃ, Πριαμῳ κακα, τιο τε παισιν.

which is as much as if ſhe had ſaid in plain Engliſh, "Why ſurely, Jupiter, you won't "be ſo cruel as to render ineffectual all my "expence of labor and ſweat. Have I "not tired both my horſes, in order to "raiſe forces to ruin Priam and his fa-"mily?" It requires the moſt delicate touches imaginable, to raiſe ſuch a ſentiment as this into any tolerable degree of dignity. But a ſkilful artiſt knows how to

embelliſh

embelliſh the moſt ordinary ſubject; and what would be low and ſpiritleſs from a leſs maſterly pencil, becomes pleaſing and graceful when worked up by Mr. Pope's:

Shall then, O tyrant of th' etherial plain,
My ſchemes, my labors, and my hopes be vain?
Have I for this ſhook Ilion with alarms,
Aſſembled nations, ſet two worlds in arms?
To ſpread the war I flew from ſhore to ſhore,
Th' immortal courſers ſcarce the labor bore.

But to ſhew you that I am not ſo enthuſiaſtic an admirer of this glorious performance, as to be blind to its imperfections; I will venture to point out a paſſage or two (amongſt others which might be mentioned) wherein Mr. Pope's uſual judgment ſeems to have failed him.

When Iris is ſent to inform Helen that Paris and Menelaus were going to decide the fate of both nations by ſingle combat, and were actually upon the point of engaging; Homer deſcribes her as haſtily throwing a veil over her face, and flying to the Scæan gate, from whence ſhe might have a full view of the field of battle:

Αὐτικα δ' αργυφῃσι καλυψαμενη οθονῃσιν,
Ωρματ' εκ θαλαμοιο, τερεν κατα δακρυ χεουσα.
Ουκ οιη· αμα τηγε και αμφιπολοι δυ' επουτο, &c.
Αιψα δ' επειθ' ικανον, οθι Σκαιαι πυλαι ησαν.
Il. iii. 142.

NOTHING could poſſibly be more intereſting to Helen, than the circumſtances in which ſhe is here repreſented: it was neceſſary therefore to exhibit her, as Homer we ſee has, with much eagerneſs and impetuoſity in her motion. But what can be more calm and quiet than the attitude wherein the Helen of Mr. Pope appears?

O'er her fair face a ſnowy veil ſhe threw,
And ſoftly ſighing from the loom withdrew:
Her handmaids —— —— wait
Her ſilent *footſteps to the Scæan gate.*

THOSE expreſſions of ſpeed and impetuoſity which occur ſo often in the original lines, viz. *αυτικα — ωρματ — αιψα ικανον*, would have been ſufficient, one ſhould have imagined, to have guarded a tranſlator from falling into an impropriety of this kind.

THIS brings to my mind another inſtance of the ſame nature, where our Engliſh

liſh poet, by not attending to the particular expreſſion of his author, has given us a picture of a very different kind than what Homer intended. In the firſt Iliad the reader is introduced into a council of the Grecian chiefs, where very warm debates ariſe between Agamemnon and Achilles. As nothing was likely to prove more fatal to the Grecians than a diſſenſion between thoſe two princes, the venerable old Neſtor is repreſented as greatly alarmed at the conſequences of this quarrel, and riſing up to moderate between them with a vivacity much beyond his years. This circumſtance Homer has happily intimated by a ſingle word:

τοισι δε Νεστωρ
ΑΝΟΡΟΥΣΕ.

Upon which one of the commentators very juſtly obſerves — *ut in re magna et periculoſâ, non placidè aſſurgentem facit, ſed* prorumpentem *ſenem quoque.* A circumſtance which Horace ſeems to have had particularly in his view in the epiſtle to Lollius:

Neſtor componere lites
Inter Peleiden feſtinat *et inter Atriden.*

Ep. i. 2.

This

This beauty Mr. Pope has utterly overlooked, and ſubſtituted an idea very different from that which the verb ανορθω ſuggeſts: he renders it,

Slow *from his ſeat aroſe the Pylian ſage.*

But a more unfortunate would could ſcarcely have been joined with *aroſe*, as it deſtroys the whole ſpirit of the piece, and is juſt the reverſe of what both the occaſion and the original required.

I DOUBT, Euphronius, you are growing weary: will you have patience, however, whilſt I mention one obſervation more? and I will interrupt you no longer.

WHEN Menelaus and Paris enter the liſts, Pope ſays,

Amidſt the dreadful vale the chiefs advance,
All pale with rage, and ſhake the threat'ning lance.

In the original it is,

Ες μεσσον Τρωων και Αχαιων εστιχοωντο
Δεινον δερκομενοι. Il. iii. 341.

But does not the expreſſion — *all pale with rage* — call up a very contrary idea to

to δεινον δερκομενοι? The former ſeems to ſuggeſt to one's imagination the ridiculous paſſion of a couple of female ſcolds; whereas the latter conveys the terrifying image of two indignant heroes, animated with calm and deliberate valor. Farewel. I am, &c.

LETTER XX.

To CLEORA.

March 3, 1739.

AFTER having read your laſt letter, I can no longer doubt of the truth of thoſe ſalutary effects, which are ſaid to have been produced by the application of certain written words. I have myſelf experienced the poſſibility of the thing: and a few ſtrokes of your pen have abated a pain, which of all others is the moſt uneaſy, and the moſt difficult to be relieved; even the pain, my Cleora, of the mind. To ſympathize with my ſufferings, as Cleora kindly aſſures me ſhe does, is to aſſuage them; and half the uneaſineſs of her abſence is removed, when ſhe tells me that ſhe regrets mine.

SINCE

SINCE I thus aſſuredly find that you can work miracles, I will believe likewiſe that you have the gift of prophecy; and I can no longer deſpair that the time will come, when we ſhall again meet, ſince you have abſolutely pronounced that it will. I have ventured, therefore (as you will ſee by my laſt letter) already to name the day. In the mean time, I amuſe myſelf with doing every thing that looks like a preparation for my journey; *e gia apro le braccia per ſtringervi affettuoſamente al mio ſenno.*

THE truth is, you are every inſtant in my thoughts, and each occurrence that ariſes ſuggeſts you to my remembrance. If I ſee a clear ſky, I wiſh it may extend to you; and if I obſerve a cloudy one, I am uneaſy leſt my Cleora ſhould be expoſed to it. I never read an intereſting ſtory, or a pertinent remark, that I do not long to communicate it to you, and learn to double my reliſh by hearing your judicious obſervations. I cannot take a turn in my garden but every walk calls you into my mind. Ah Cleora! I never view thoſe ſcenes of our former converſations, without a ſigh. Judge

then

then how often I ſigh, when every object that ſurrounds me brings you freſh to my imagination. You remember the attitude in which the faithful Penelope is drawn in Pope's Odyſſey, when ſhe goes to fetch the bow of Ulyſſes for the ſuitors:

Acroſs her knees ſhe laid the well-known bow,
And penſive ſat, and tears began to flow.

I find myſelf in numberleſs ſuch tender reveries; and if I were ever ſo much diſpoſed to baniſh you from my thoughts, it would be impoſſible I ſhould do ſo, in a place where every thing that preſents itſelf to me, reminds me that you were once here. I muſt not expect (I ought not, indeed, for the ſake of your repoſe to wiſh) to be thus frequently and thus fondly the ſubject of your meditations: but may I not hope that you employ a few moments at leaſt of every day, in thinking of him whoſe whole attention is fixed upon you?

I HAVE ſent you the hiſtory of the Conqueſt of Mexico, in Engliſh, which, as it is tranſlated by ſo good a hand, will be equally pleaſing and leſs troubleſome, than reading it in the original. I long to be of this

this party in your expedition to the new world, as I lately was in your conqueſts of Italy. How happily could I ſit by Cleora's ſide, and purſue the Spaniards in their triumphs, as I formerly did the Romans; or make a tranſition from a nation of heroes to a republic of ants! Glorious days indeed! when we paſſed whole mornings either with dictators or butterflies; and ſometimes ſent out a colony of Romans, and ſometimes of emmits! Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XXII.

To PALEMON.

Dec. 18, 1740.

THO I am not convinced by your arguments, I am charmed by your eloquence, and admire the preacher at the ſame time that I condemn the doctrine. But there is no ſort of perſons whoſe opinions one is more inclined to wiſh right, than thoſe who are ingeniouſly in the wrong; who have the art to add grace to error, and can dignify miſtakes.

FORGIVE

FORGIVE me then, Palemon, if I am more than commonly ſolicitous that you ſhould review the ſentiments you advanced, (I will not ſay, ſupported) with ſo much elegance in your laſt letter, and that I preſs you to re-conſider your notions again and again. Can I fail, indeed, to wiſh that you may find reaſon to renounce an opinion, which may poſſibly one day or other deprive me of a friend, and my country of a patriot? while Providence, perhaps, would yet have ſpared him to both. Can I fail to regret, that I ſhould hold one of the moſt valuable enjoyments of my life upon a tenure more than ordinarily precarious, and that, beſides thoſe numberleſs accidents by which chance may ſnatch you from the world, a gloomy ſky or a croſs event may determine Palemon to put an end to a life, which all who have been a witneſs to, muſt for ever admire.

BUT "Does the ſupreme being (you "aſk) diſpenſe his bounty upon conditions "different from all other benefactors, and "will he force a gift upon me which is no "longer acceptable?"

LET me demand in return, Whether a creature, ſo confined in its perceptions as man, may not miſtake his true intereſt, and reject, from a partial regard, what would be well worth accepting upon a more comprehenſive view? May not even a mortal benefactor better underſtand the value of that preſent he offers, than the perſon to whom it is tendered? And ſhall the ſupreme Author of all beneficence, be eſteemed leſs wiſe in diſtinguiſhing the worth of thoſe grants he confers? I agree with you, indeed, that we were called into exiſtence in order to receive happineſs: but I can by no means infer from thence, that we are at liberty to reſign our being whenever it becomes a burden. On the contrary, thoſe premiſſes ſeem to lead to a concluſion directly oppoſite; and if the gracious author of my life created me with an intent to make me happy, does it not neceſſarily follow, that I ſhall moſt certainly obtain that privilege, if I do not juſtly forfeit it by my own miſconduct? Numberleſs ends may be anſwered in the ſchemes of Providence, by turning aſide or interrupting that ſtream of bounty, which our limited reaſon can in

no

no ſort diſcover. How preſumptuous then muſt it be, to throw back a grant upon the hands of the great Governor of the univerſe, merely becauſe we do not immediately feel, or underſtand, its full advantages!

THAT it is the intention of the Deity we ſhould remain in this ſtate of being, till his ſummons calls us away, ſeems as evident as that we at firſt entered into it by his command: for we can no more continue, than we could begin to exiſt, without the concurrence of the ſame ſupreme interpoſition. While, therefore, the animal powers do not ceaſe to perform thoſe functions to which they were directed by their great author, it may juſtly, I think, be concluded that it is his deſign they ſhould not.

STILL, however, you urge, "That by "putting a period to your own exiſtence "here, you only alter the modification of "matter; and how (you aſk) is the or-"der of Providence diſturbed by changing "the combination of a parcel of atoms from "one figure to another?"

BUT ſurely, Palemon, there is a fallacy in this reaſoning: ſuicide is ſomething more

than changing the component parts of the animal machine. It is ſtriking out a ſpiritual ſubſtance from that rank of beings, wherein the wiſe Author of nature has placed it, and forcibly breaking in upon ſome other order of exiſtence. And as it is impoſſible for the limited powers of reaſon to penetrate the deſigns of Providence, it can never be proved that this is not diſturbing the ſchemes of nature. We poſſibly may be, and indeed moſt probably are, connected with ſome higher rank of creatures: now philoſophy will never be able to determine, that thoſe connections may not be diſconcerted by prematurely quitting our preſent manſion.

One of the ſtrongeſt paſſions implanted in human nature, is the fear of death. It ſeems, indeed, to be placed by Providence as a ſort of guard to retain mankind within their appointed ſtation. Why elſe ſhould it ſo univerſally and almoſt invariably operate? It is obſervable that no ſuch affection appears in any ſpecies of beings below us. They have no temptation, or no ability, to deſert the poſt aſſigned to them, and therefore, it ſhould ſeem, they have

no

no checks of this kind to keep them within their preſcribed limits. This general horror then in mankind at the apprehenſion of their diſſolution, carries with it, I think, a very ſtrong preſumptive argument in favor of the opinion I am endeavouring to maintain. For if it were not given to us for the purpoſe I have ſuppoſed, what other can it ſerve? Can it be imagined that the benevolent Author of nature would have ſo deeply wove it into our conſtitution, only to interrupt our preſent enjoyments?

I CANNOT, I confeſs, diſcover how the practice of ſuicide can be juſtified upon any principle, except upon that of downright atheiſm. If we ſuppoſe a good Providence to govern the world, the conſequence is undeniable, that we muſt entirely rely upon it. If we imagine an evil one to prevail, what chance is there of finding that happineſs in another ſcene, which we have in vain ſought for in this? The ſame malevolent omnipotence can as eaſily purſue us in the next remove, as perſecute us in this our firſt ſtation.

UPON the whole, Palemon, prudence ſtrongly forbids ſo hazardous an experiment

as that of being our own executioners. We know the worſt that can happen in ſupporting life under all its moſt wretched circumſtances: and if we ſhould be miſtaken in thinking it our duty to endure a load, which in truth we may ſecurely lay down; it is an error extremely limited in its conſequences. They cannot extend beyond this preſent exiſtence, and poſſibly may end much earlier: whereas no mortal can, with the leaſt degree of aſſurance, pronounce what may not be the effects of acting agreably to the contrary opinion. I am, &c.

LETTER XXIII.

To CLYTANDER.

Sept. 23, 1733.

I AM by no means in the ſentiments of that Grecian of your acquaintance, who as often as he was preſſed to marry, replied either that it was too ſoon or too late: and I think my favorite author, the honeſt Montaigne, a little too ſevere when he obſerves upon this ſtory, *qu'il faut refuſer l'opportunité à toute action importune*: for,

higher

higher of the genial bed by far,
And with myſterious reverence I deem.

MILTON.

However, I am not adventurous enough to join with thoſe friends you mention, who are ſoliciting you, it ſeems, to look out for an engagement of this kind. It is an union which requires ſo much delicacy in the cementing; it is a commerce where ſo many nice circumſtances muſt concur to render it ſucceſsful, that I would not venture to pronounce of any two perſons, that they are qualified for each other.

I DO not know a woman in the world who ſeems more formed to render a man of ſenſe and generoſity happy in this ſtate, than Amaſia: yet I ſhould ſcarcely have courage to recommend even Amaſia to my friend. You have ſeen her, I dare ſay, a thouſand times; but I am perſuaded ſhe never attracted your particular obſervation, for ſhe is in the number of thoſe who are ever overlooked in a crowd. As often as I converſe with her, ſhe puts me in mind of the golden age: there is an innocency and ſimplicity in all her words and actions, that equals any thing the poets have deſcribed of thoſe pure and

artleſs times. Indeed the greateſt part of her life has been ſpent much in the ſame way as the early inhabitants of the world, in that blameleſs period of it, uſed, we are told, to diſpoſe of theirs; under the ſhade and ſhelter of her own venerable oaks, and in thoſe rural amuſements which are ſure to produce a confirmed habit both of health and chearfulneſs. Amaſia never ſaid, or attempted to ſay, a ſprightly thing in all her life; but ſhe has done ten thouſand generous ones: and if ſhe is not the moſt conſpicuous figure at an aſſembly, ſhe never envied or maligned thoſe who are. Her heart is all tenderneſs and benevolence: no ſucceſs ever attended any of her acquaintance, which did not fill her boſom with the moſt diſintereſted complacency; as no misfortune ever reached her knowledge, that ſhe did not relieve or participate by her generoſity. If ever ſhe ſhould fall into the hands of a man ſhe loves (and I am perſuaded ſhe would eſteem it the worſt kind of proſtitution to reſign herſelf into any other) her whole life would be one continued ſeries of kindneſs and compliance. The humble opinion ſhe has of her own uncommon

uncommon merit, would make her ſo much the more ſenſible of her huſband's; and thoſe little ſubmiſſions on his ſide, which a woman of more pride and ſpirit would conſider only as a claim of right, would be eſteemed by Amaſia as ſo many additional motives to her love and gratitude.

But if I dwell any longer upon this amiable picture, I may be in danger, perhaps, of reſembling that ancient artiſt, who grew enamored of the production of his own pencil: for my ſecurity, therefore, as well as to put an end to your trouble, it will be beſt, I believe, to ſtop here. I am, &c.

LETTER XXIV.

To ORONTES.

I was apprehenſive my laſt had given you but too much occaſion of recollecting the remark of one of your admired antients, that "the art of eloquence is taught "by man, but it is the gods alone that in-"ſpire the wiſdom of ſilence." That wiſdom, however, you are not willing I ſhould yet

yet practice; and you muſt needs, it ſeems, have my farther ſentiments upon the ſubject of Oratory. Be it then as my friend requires; but let him remember, it is a hazardous thing to put ſome men upon talking on a favorite topic.

One of the moſt pleaſing exerciſes of the imagination, is that wherein ſhe is employed in comparing diſtinct ideas, and diſcovering their various reſemblances. There is no ſingle perception of the mind that is not capable of an infinite number of conſiderations in reference to other objects; and it is in the novelty and variety of theſe unexpected connections, that the richneſs of a writer's genius is chiefly diſplayed. A vigorous and lively fancy does not tamely confine itſelf to the idea which lies before it, but looks beyond the immediate object of its contemplation, and obſerves how it ſtands in conformity with numberleſs others. It is the prerogative of the human mind thus to bring its images together, and compare the ſeveral circumſtances of ſimilitude that attend them. By this means eloquence exerciſes a kind of magic power; ſhe can raiſe innumerable beauties from the moſt barren ſubjects, and

give

give the grace of novelty to the moſt common. The imagination is thus kept awake by the moſt agreable motion, and entertained with a thouſand different views both of art and nature, which ſtill terminate upon the principal object. For this reaſon I prefer the metaphor to the ſimile, as a far more pleaſing method of illuſtration. In the former, the action of the mind is leſs languid, as it is employed at one and the ſame inſtant in comparing the reſemblance with the idea it attends; whereas in the latter, its operations are more ſlow, being obliged to ſtand ſtill as it were, in order to contemplate firſt the principal object, and then its correſponding image.

Of all the flowers, however, that embelliſh the regions of eloquence, there is none of a more tender and delicate nature; as as there is nothing wherein a fine writer is more diſtinguiſhed from one of an ordinary claſs, than in the conduct and application of this figure. He is at liberty, indeed, to range thro the whole compaſs of creation, and collect his images from every object that ſurrounds him. But tho he may be thus amply furniſhed with materials, great judgment

judgment is required in chooſing them: for to render a metaphor perfect, it muſt not only be apt, but pleaſing; it muſt entertain, as well as enlighten. Mr. Dryden, therefore, can hardly eſcape the imputation of a very unpardonable breach of delicacy, when, in the dedication of his Juvenal, he obſerves to the duke of Dorſet, that "ſome "bad poems carry their owners marks a-"bout them—ſome brand or other on this "*buttock* or that *ear*, that it is notorious "who is the owner of the cattle." The poet Manilius ſeems to have raiſed an image of the ſame injudicious kind, in that compliment which he pays to Homer in the following verſes:

cujuſque ex ore profuſos
Omnis poſteritas latices in carmine duxit.

I COULD never read theſe lines without calling to mind thoſe groteſque heads, which are fixed to the roof of the old building of King's college in Cambridge; which the ingenious architect has repreſented in the act of vomiting out the rain; that falls thro certain pipes moſt judiciouſly ſtuck in their mouths for that purpoſe. Mr. Addiſon

recommends a method of trying the propriety of a metaphor, by drawing it out in viſible repreſentation. Accordingly, I think this curious conceit of the builder might be employed to the advantage of the youth in that univerſity, and ſerve for as proper an illuſtration of the abſurdity of the poet's image, as that antient picture which Ælian mentions, where Homer was figured with a ſtream running from his mouth, and a groupe of poets lapping it up at a diſtance.

But beſides a certain decorum which is requiſite to conſtitute a perfect metaphor; a writer of true taſte and genius will always ſingle out the moſt obvious images, and place them in the moſt unobſerved points of reſemblance. Accordingly, all alluſions which point to the more abſtruſe branches of the arts or ſciences, and with which none can be ſuppoſed to be acquainted but thoſe who have gone far into the deeper ſtudies, ſhould be carefully avoided, not only as pedantic, but impertinent; as they pervert the ſingle uſe of this figure, and add neither grace nor force to the idea they would elucidate. The moſt pleaſing metaphors therefore are thoſe which are de-

rived

rived from the more frequent occurrences of art or nature, or the civil tranſactions and cuſtoms of mankind. Thus how expreſſive, yet at the ſame time how familiar, is that image which Otway has put into the mouth of Metellus, in his play of Caius Marius, where he calls Sulpicius

That mad wild bull whom Marius lets looſe
On each occaſion, when he'd make Rome feel him,
To toſs our laws and liberties i' th' air.

But I never met with a more agreable, or a more ſignificant alluſion, than one in Quintus Curtius, which is borrowed from the moſt ordinary object in common life. That author repreſents Craterus as diſſuading Alexander from continuing his Indian expedition, againſt enemies too contemptible, he tells him, for the glory of his arms, and concludes his ſpeech with the following beautiful thought: *Cito gloria obſoleſcit in ſordidis hoſtibus; nec quidquam indignius eſt quam* conſumi *eam ubi non poteſt* oſtendi. Now I am got into Latin quotations, I cannot forbear mentioning a moſt beautiful paſſage, which I lately had the pleaſure

pleaſure of reading, and which I will venture to produce as equal to any thing of the ſame kind, either in antient or modern compoſition. I met with it in the ſpeech of a young orator, to whom I have the happineſs to be related, and who will one day, I perſuade myſelf, prove as great an honor to his country, as he is at preſent to that learned ſociety of which he is a member. He is ſpeaking of the writings of a celebrated prelate, who received his education in that famous ſeminary to which he belongs, and illuſtrates the peculiar elegance which diſtinguiſhes all that author's performances, by the following juſt and pleaſing aſſemblage of diction and imagery: *In quodcumque opus ſe parabat* (*et per omnia ſane verſatile illius ſe duxit ingenium*) *neſcio quâ luce ſibi ſoli propriâ, id illuminavit; haud diſſimili ei aureo Titiani radio, qui per totam tabulam gliſcens eam verè ſuam denunciat.* As there is nothing more entertaining to the imagination than the productions of the fine arts; there is no kind of ſimilitudes or metaphors which are in general more ſtriking, than thoſe which allude to their properties and effects. It is with great judgment, therefore, that

that the ingenious author of the dialogue concerning the Decline of eloquence among the Romans, recommends to his orator a general acquaintance with the whole circle of the polite arts. A knowledge of this ſort furniſhes an author with illuſtrations of the moſt agreable kind, and ſets a gloſs upon his compoſitions that enlivens them with ſingular grace and ſpirit.

WERE I to point out the beauty and efficacy of metaphorical language, by particular inſtances, I ſhould rather draw my examples from the moderns than the antients; the latter being ſcarcely, I think, ſo exact and delicate in this article of compoſition, as the former. The great improvements, indeed, in natural knowledge which have been made in theſe later ages, have opened a vein of metaphor entirely unknown to the antients, and enriched the fancy of modern wits with a new ſtock of the moſt pleaſing ideas: a circumſtance which muſt give them a very conſiderable advantage over the Greeks and Romans. I am ſure at leaſt, of all the writings with which I have been converſant, the works of Mr. Addiſon will afford the moſt abundant ſupply of this kind,

kind, in all its variety and perfection. Truth and beauty of imagery is, indeed, his characteriſtical diſtinction, and the principal point of eminence which raiſes his ſtyle above that of every author in any language that has fallen within my notice. He is every where highly figurative; yet at the ſame time he is the moſt eaſy and perſpicuous writer I have ever peruſed. The reaſon is, his images are always taken from the moſt natural and familiar appearances; as they are choſen with the utmoſt delicacy and judgment. Suffer me only to mention one out of a thouſand I could name, as it appears to me the fineſt and moſt expreſſive that ever language conveyed. It is in one of his inimitable papers upon Paradiſe loſt, where he is taking notice of thoſe changes in nature which the author of that truly divine poem deſcribes as immediately ſucceeding the fall. Among other prodigies, Milton repreſents the ſun in an eclipſe; and at the ſame time a bright cloud in the weſtern region of the heavens deſcending with a band of angels. Mr. Addiſon, in order to ſhew his author's art and judgment in the conduct and diſpoſition of this ſub-

lime ſcenery, obſerves, "the whole *theatre* "of nature is *darkened*, that this glorious "*machine* may appear in all its luſtre and "magnificence." I know not, Orontes, whether you will agree in ſentiment with me; but I muſt confeſs I am at a loſs which to admire moſt upon this occaſion, the poet or the critic.

THERE is a double beauty in images of this kind when they are not only metaphors, but alluſions. I was much pleaſed with an inſtance of this uncommon ſpecies, in a little poem entitled The Spleen. The author of that piece (who has thrown together more original thoughts than I ever read in the ſame compaſs of lines) ſpeaking of the advantages of exerciſe in diſſipating thoſe gloomy vapors, which are ſo apt to hang upon ſome minds, employs the following image:

Throw but a ſtone, the giant dies.

You will obſerve, Orontes, that the metaphor here is conceived with great propriety of thought, if we conſider it only in its primary view; but when we ſee it pointing ſtill farther, and hinting at the ſtory of

David and Goliath, it receives a very conſiderable improvement from this double application.

It muſt be owned, ſome of the greateſt authors, both antient and modern, have made many remarkable ſlips in the management of this figure, and have ſometimes expreſſed themſelves with as much impropriety as an honeſt ſailor of my acquaintance, a captain of a privateer, who wrote an account to his owners of an engagement, "in which he had the good fortune, "he told them, of having only one of his "*hands* ſhot thro the *noſe*." The great caution therefore ſhould be, never to join any idea to a figurative expreſſion, which would not be applicable to it in a literal ſenſe. Thus Cicero, in his treatiſe *De claris oratoribus*, ſpeaking of the family of the Scipios, is guilty of an impropriety of this kind: *O generoſam ſtirpem* (ſays he) *et tanquam in unam arborem plura genera, ſic in iſtam domum multorum inſitam atque* illuminatam *ſapientiam*. Mr. Addiſon, likewiſe, has fallen into an error of the ſame ſort, where he obſerves, "there is not a ſingle view of "human nature, which is not ſufficient to

"*extinguiſh* the *ſeeds* of pride." In this paſſage he evidently unites images together, which have no connection with each other. When a ſeed has loſt its power of vegetation, I might in a metaphorical ſenſe ſay it is *extinguiſhed*: but when in the ſame ſenſe I call that diſpoſition of the heart which produces pride, the *ſeed* of that paſſion, I cannot, without introducing a confuſion of ideas, apply any word to *ſeed*, but what correſpends with its real properties or circumſtances.

ANOTHER miſtake in the uſe of this figure is, when different images are crouded too cloſe upon each other, or (to expreſs myſelf after Quintilian) when a ſentence ſets out with ſtorms and tempeſts, and ends with fire and flames. A judicious reader will obſerve an impropriety of this kind in one of the late eſſays of the inimitable author laſt quoted, where he tells us, "that "women were formed to temper mankind "not to ſet an *edge* upon their minds, and "blow up in them thoſe paſſions which are "too apt to riſe of their own accord." Thus a celebrated orator, ſpeaking of that little blackening ſpirit in mankind, which is fond of diſcovering ſpots in the brighteſt cha-

characters; remarks, that when perſons of this caſt of temper have mentioned any virtue of their neighbor, "it is well, if to balance the matter they do not clap ſome "fault into the oppoſite ſcale, that ſo *the* "*enemy may not go off with flying colors.*" Dr. Swift alſo, whoſe ſtyle is the moſt pure and ſimple of any of our claſſic writers, and who does not ſeem in general very fond of the figurative manner, is not always free from cenſure in his management of the metaphorical language. In his eſſay on the Diſſentions of Athens and Rome, ſpeaking of the populace, he take notice, that "tho "in their corrupt notions of divine worſhip, they are apt to multiply their "gods, yet their earthly devotion is ſeldom paid to above one *idol* at a time, "whoſe *oar* they pull with leſs murmuring and much more ſkill, than when "they ſhare the *lading*, or even hold the "*helm.*" The moſt injudicious writer could not poſſibly have fallen into a more abſurd inconſiſtency of metaphor, than this eminent wit has inadvertently been betrayed into, in this paſſage. For what connection is there between worſhiping and *rowing*,

and who ever heard before of pulling the *oar* of an idol ?

As there are certain metaphors which are common to all languages ; there are others of ſo delicate a nature as not to bear tranſplanting from one nation into another. There is no part, therefore, of the buſineſs of a tranſlator more difficult to manage, than this figure, as it requires great judgment to diſtinguiſh when it may, and may not, be naturalized with propriety and elegance. The want of this neceſſary diſcernment has led the common race of tranſlators into great abſurdities, and is one of the principal reaſons that performances of this kind are generally ſo inſipid. What ſtrange work, for inſtance, would an injudicious interpreter make with the following metaphor in Homer ?

Νων γαρ παντεσσιν επι ξυρῃ ιςαται ακης.

Il. x. 173.

But Mr. Pope, by artfully dropping the particular image, yet retaining the general idea, has happily preſerved the ſpirit of his author, and at the ſame time humored the different taſte of his own countrymen :

Each

Each ſingle Greek, in this concluſive ſtrife,
Stands on the ſharpeſt edge *of death or life.*

AND now, Orontes, do you not think it high time to be diſmiſſed from this fairy land? Permit me, however, juſt to add, that this figure, which caſts ſo much light and beauty upon works of genius, ought to be entirely baniſhed from the ſeverer compoſitions of philoſophy. It is the buſineſs of the latter to ſeparate reſemblances, not to find them, and to deliver her diſcoveries in the plaineſt and moſt unornamented expreſſions. Much diſpute, and, perhaps, many errors, might have been avoided, if metaphor had been thus confined within its proper limits, and never wandred from the regions of eloquence and poetry. I am, &c.

LETTER XXV.

To PHILOTES.

Auguſt 5, 1744.

DON'T you begin to think that I ill deſerve the preſcription you ſent me, ſince I have ſcarce had the manners even to thank you for it? It muſt be confeſſed I have neglected to *honor my phyſician with the honor due unto him*; that is, I have omitted, not only what I ought to have performed in good breeding, but what I am expreſly enjoined by my Bible. I am not, however, entirely without excuſe; a ſilly one, I own; nevertheleſs, it is the truth. I have lately been a good deal out of ſpirits. But at length the fit is over. Amongſt the number of thoſe things which are wanting to ſecure me from a return of it, I muſt always reckon the company of my friend. I have, indeed, frequent occaſion for you; not in the way of your profeſſion, but in a better: in the way of friendſhip. There is a healing quality in that intercourſe, which a certain author has, with infinite propriety, termed *the medicine of life*. It is a medi-

cine,

cine, which unluckily lies almoſt wholly out of my reach; fortune having ſeparated me from thoſe few friends whom I pretend or deſire to claim. General acquaintances, you know, I am not much inclined to cultivate; ſo that I am at preſent, as much ſecluded from ſociety as if I were a *ſojourner in a ſtrange land*. Tho retirement is my dear delight, yet, upon ſome occaſions, I think I have too much of it; and I agree with Balzac, *que la ſolitude eſt certainement une belle choſe: mais il y a plaiſir d'avoir quelqu'un qui ſache repondre; à qui on puiſſe dire de tems en tems, que la ſolitude eſt une belle choſe*. But I muſt not forget, that as I ſometimes want company, you may as often wiſh to be alone; and that I may, perhaps, be at this inſtant breaking in upon one of thoſe hours which you deſire to enjoy without interruption. I will only detain you therefore, whilſt I add, that I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXVI.

To PHIDIPPUS.

May 1, 1745.

IF that friend of yours, whom you are deſirous to add to the number of mine, were endued with no other quality than the laſt you mentioned in the catalogue of his virtues; I ſhould eſteem his acquaintance as one of my moſt valuable privileges. When you aſſured me, therefore, of the Generoſity of his diſpoſition, I wanted no additional motive to embrace your propoſal of joining you and him at * *. To ſay truth, I conſider a generous mind as the nobleſt work of the creation, and am perſuaded, wherever it reſides, no real merit can be wanting. It is, perhaps, the moſt ſingular of all the moral endowments: I am ſure at leaſt, it is often imputed where it cannot juſtly be claimed. The meaneſt ſelf-love, under ſome refined diſguiſe, frequently paſſes upon common obſervers for this godlike principle; and I have known many a popular action attributed to this motive, when it flowed

ſlowed from no higher a ſource than the ſuggeſtions of concealed vanity. Good-nature, as it has many features in common with this virtue, is uſually miſtaken for it: the former, however, is but the effect, poſſibly, of a happy diſpoſition of the animal ſtructure, or, as Dryden ſomewhere calls it, of a certain "milkineſs of blood:" whereas the latter is ſeated in the mind, and can never ſubſiſt where good-ſenſe and enlarged ſentiments have no exiſtence. It is entirely founded, indeed, upon juſtneſs of thought: which, perhaps, is the reaſon this virtue is ſo little the characteriſtic of mankind in general. A man, whoſe mind is warped by the ſelfiſh paſſions, or contracted by the narrow prejudices of ſects or parties, if he does not want honeſty, muſt undoubtedly want underſtanding. The ſame clouds that darken his intellectual views, obſtruct his moral ones; and his generoſity is extremely circumſcribed, becauſe his reaſon is exceedingly limited.

It is the diſtinguiſhing pre-eminence of the Chriſtian ſyſtem, that it cheriſhes this elevated principle in one of its nobleſt exertions. Forgiveneſs of injuries, I confeſs indeed,

indeed, has been inculcated by ſeveral of the heathen moraliſts; but it never entered into the eſtabliſhed ordinances of any religion, till it had the ſanction of the great author of ours. I have often, however, wondered that the antients, who raiſed ſo many virtues and affections of the mind into divinities, ſhould never have given a place in their temples to Generoſity; unleſs, perhaps, they included it under the notion of FIDES or HONOS. But ſurely ſhe might reaſonably have claimed a ſeparate altar, and ſuperior rites. A principle of honor may reſtrain a man from counteracting the ſocial ties, who yet has nothing of that active flame of generoſity, which is too powerful to be confined within the humbler boundaries of mere negative duties. True generoſity riſes above the ordinary rules of ſocial conduct, and flows with much too full a ſtream to be comprehended within the preciſe marks of formal precepts. It is a vigorous principle in the ſoul, which opens and expands all her virtues far beyond thoſe which are only the forced and unnatural productions of a timid obedience. The man who is influenced ſingly by motives of the latter

kind, aims no higher than at certain authoritative ſtandards, without ever attempting to reach thoſe glorious elevations, which conſtitute the only true heroiſm of the ſocial character. Religion, without this ſovereign principle, degenerates into ſlaviſh fear, and wiſdom into a ſpecious cunning; learning is but the avarice of the mind, and wit its more pleaſing kind of madneſs. In a word, generoſity ſanctifies every paſſion, and add sgrace to every acquiſition of the ſoul; and if it does not neceſſarily include, at leaſt it reflects a luſtre upon the whole circle of moral and intellectual qualities.

But I am running into a general panegyric upon generoſity, when I only meant to acknowledge the particular inſtance you have given me of yours, in being deſirous of communicating to me a treaſure, which I know much better how to value than how to deſerve. Be aſſured, therefore, tho Euphronius had none of thoſe polite accompliſhments you enumerate, yet, after what you have informed me concerning his heart, I ſhould eſteem his friendſhip of more worth than all the learning of antient Greece, and all the *virtù* of modern Italy. I am, &c.

LETTER XXVII.

To SAPPHO[a].

March 10, 1731.

WHILE yet no am'rous youths around thee bow,
Nor flatt'ring verſe conveys the faithleſs vow;
To graver notes will Sappho's ſoul attend,
And ere ſhe hears the lover, hear the friend?
LET maids leſs bleſs'd employ their meaner arts
To reign proud tyrants o'er unnumber'd hearts;
May Sappho learn (for nobler triumphs born)
Thoſe little conqueſts of her ſex to ſcorn.
To form thy boſom to each gen'rous deed;
To plant thy mind with ev'ry uſeful ſeed;
Be theſe thy arts; nor ſpare the grateful toil,
Where nature's hand has bleſs'd the happy ſoil.
So ſhalt thou know, with pleaſing ſkill to blend
The lovely miſtreſs and inſtructive friend:
So ſhalt thou know, when unrelenting time
Shall ſpoil thoſe charms yet op'ning to their prime,

[a] A young lady of thirteen years of age.

To

To eaſe the loſs of beauty's tranſient flow'r,
While reaſon keeps what rapture gave before.
And oh! whilſt wit, fair dawning, ſpreads its ray,
Serenely riſing to a glorious day,
To hail the growing luſtre oft be mine,
Thou early fav'rite of the ſacred Nine!
And ſhall the Muſe with blameleſs boaſt pretend,
In youth's gay bloom that Sappho call'd me friend:
That urg'd by me ſhe ſhun'd the dang'rous way,
Where heedleſs maids in endleſs error ſtray;
That ſcorning ſoon her ſex's idler art,
Fair praiſe inſpir'd and virtue warm'd her heart;
That fond to reach the diſtant paths of fame,
I taught her infant genius where to aim?
Thus when the feather'd choir firſt tempt the ſky,
And, all unſkill'd, their feeble pinions try,
Th' experienc'd ſire preſcribes th' advent'rous height,
Guides the young wing, and pleas'd attends the flight.

LET-

LETTER XXVIII.

To PHIDIPPUS.

YES, Phidippus, I entirely agree with you: the antients moſt certainly had much loftier notions of Friendſhip, than ſeem to be generally entertained at preſent. But may they not juſtly be conſidered on this ſubject, as down right enthuſiaſts? Whilſt indeed they talk of friendſhip as a virtue, or place it in a rank little inferior, I can admire the generous warmth of their ſentiments; but when they go ſo far as to make it a ſerious queſtion, whether juſtice herſelf ought not in ſome particular caſes to yield to this their ſupreme affection of the heart; there, I confeſs, they leave me far behind.

IF we had not a treatiſe extant upon the ſubject, we ſhould ſcarce believe this fact upon the credit of thoſe authors who have delivered it down to us: but Cicero himſelf has ventured to take the affirmative ſide of this debate in his celebrated dialogue inſcribed Lælius. He followed, it ſeems, in this notion the ſentiments of the Grecian Theo-

Theophraſtus, who publickly maintained the ſame aſtoniſhing theory.

It muſt be confeſſed, however, theſe admirers of the falſe ſublime in friendſhip talk upon this ſubject with ſo much caution and in ſuch general terms, that one is inclined to think they themſelves a little ſuſpected the validity of thoſe very principles they would inculcate. We find, at leaſt, a remarkable inſtance to that purpoſe, in a circumſtance related of Chilo, one of thoſe famous ſages who are diſtinguiſhed by the pompous title of the wiſe men of Greece.

That celebrated philoſopher, being upon his death-bed, addreſſed himſelf, we are informed, to his friends who ſtood round him, to the following effect: "I cannot, thro "the courſe of a long life, look back with "uneaſineſs upon any ſingle inſtance of my "conduct, unleſs, perhaps, on that which "I am going to mention, wherein, I con-"feſs, I am ſtill doubtful whether I acted "as I ought, or not. I was once appoint-"ed judge in conjunction with two others, "when my particular friend was arraign-"ed before us: Were the laws to have "taken their free courſe, he muſt inevi-

" tably have been condemned to die. Af-
" ter much debate therefore with myſelf,
" I reſolved upon this expedient: I gave
" my own vote according to my con-
" ſcience, but at the ſame time employed
" all my eloquence to prevail with my aſ-
" ſociates to abſolve the criminal. Now I
" cannot but reflect upon this act with con-
" cern, as fearing there was ſomething of
" perfidy, in perſuading others to go coun-
" ter to what I myſelf eſteemed right."

It does not, certainly, require any great depth of caſuiſtry to pronounce upon a caſe of this nature. And yet, had Tully, that great maſter of reaſon, been Chilo's confeſſor upon this occaſion, it is very plain he would have given him abſolution, to the juſt ſcandal of the moſt ignorant curate that ever lulled a country village.

What I have here obſerved, will ſuggeſt, if I miſtake not, a very clear anſwer to the queſtion you propoſe; " Whence it
" ſhould happen, that we meet with in-
" ſtances of friendſhip among the Greeks
" and Romans, far ſuperior to any thing of
" the ſame kind which modern times have
" produced?" For while the greateſt ge-

niuſes

niuſes among them employed their talents in exalting this noble affection, and it was encouraged even by the laws themſelves; what effects might one not expect to ariſe from the concurrence of ſuch powerful cauſes? The ſeveral examples of this kind which you have pointed out, are undoubtedly highly animating and ſingular; to which give me leave to add one inſtance no leſs remarkable, tho, I think, not ſo commonly obſerved.

EUDAMIDAS the Corinthian (as the ſtory is related in Lucian's Toxaris) tho in low circumſtances himſelf, was happy in the friendſhip of two very wealthy perſons, Charixenus and Aretheus. Eudamidas, finding himſelf drawing near his end, made his will in the following terms: "I leave my "mother to Aretheus, to be maintained "and protected by him in her old age. I "bequeath to Charixenus the care of my "daughter; deſiring that he would ſee "her diſpoſed of in marriage, and portion "her at the ſame time with as ample a for-"tune as his circumſtances ſhall admit: "and, in caſe of the death of either of "theſe my two friends, I ſubſtitute the ſur-"vivor in his place."

THIS will was looked upon by ſome (as we may well imagine) to be extremely ridiculous: however, the legatees received information of it with very different ſentiments, accepting of their reſpective legacies with great ſatisfaction. It happened that Charixenus died a few days after his friend the teſtator; the ſurvivorſhip therefore taking place in favor of Aretheus, he accordingly not only took upon himſelf the care of his friend's mother, but alſo made an equal diſtribution of his eſtate between this child of Eudamidas, and an only daughter of his own, ſolemniſing both their marriages on the ſame day.

I DO not recollect that any of the moderns have raiſed their notions of friendſhip to theſe extravagant heights, excepting only a very ſingular French author, who talks in a more romantic ſtrain upon this ſubject than even the antients themſelves. Could you, Phidippus, believe a man in earneſt, who ſhould aſſert that the ſecret one has ſworn never to reveal, may without perjury be diſcovered to one's friend? Yet the honeſt Montaigne has ventured gravely to advance this extraordinary doctrine in clear and

and poſitive terms. But I never knew a ſenſible man in my life, that was not an enthuſiaſt upon ſome favorite point; as indeed there is none where it is more excuſable than in the article of friendſhip. It is that which affords the moſt pleaſing ſunſhine of our days; if therefore we ſee it now and then break out with a more than reaſonable warmth and luſtre, who is there that will not be inclined to pardon an exceſs, which can only flow from the moſt generous principles? Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XXIX.

To the ſame.

July 3, 1746.

WHEN I mentioned *grace* as eſſential in conſtituting a fine writer, I rather hoped to have found my ſentiments reflected back with a clearer light by yours; than imagined you would have called upon me to explain in form, what I only threw out by accident. To confeſs the truth, I know not whether, after all that can be ſaid to illuſtrate this uncommon quality, it muſt not at laſt be reſolved into the poet's *nequeo*

monſtrare et ſentio tantùm. In caſes of this kind, where language does not ſupply us with proper words to expreſs the notions of one's mind, we can only convey our ſentiments in figurative terms: a defect which neceſſarily introduces ſome obſcurity.

I WILL not, therefore, undertake to mark out with any ſort of preciſion, that idea which I would expreſs by the word *grace:* and, perhaps, it can no more be clearly deſcribed than juſtly defined. To give you, however, a general intimation of what I mean when I apply that term to compoſitions of genius, I would reſemble it to that eaſy air, which ſo remarkably diſtinguiſhes certain perſons of a genteel and liberal caſt. It conſiſts, not only in the particular beauty of ſingle parts, but ariſes from the general ſymmetry and conſtruction of the whole. An author may be juſt in his ſentiments, lively in his figures, and clear in his expreſſion; yet may have no claim to be admitted into the rank of finiſhed writers. Thoſe ſeveral members muſt be ſo agreably united as mutually to reflect beauty upon each other: their arrangement muſt be ſo happily diſpoſed as not to admit of the leaſt

tranſpo-

tranſpoſition without manifeſt prejudice to the entire piece. The thoughts, the metaphors, the alluſions, and the diction ſhould appear eaſy and natural, and ſeem to ariſe like ſo many ſpontaneous productions, rather than as the effects of art or labor.

WHATEVER, therefore, is forced, or affected in the ſentiments; whatever is pompous or pedantic in the expreſſion, is the very reverſe of *grace*. Her mien is neither that of a prude nor a coquet; ſhe is regular without formality, and ſprightly without being fantaſtical. Grace, in ſhort, is to good writing what a proper light is to a fine picture; it not only ſhews all the figures in their ſeveral proportions and relations, but ſhews them in the moſt advantageous manner.

As genteelity (to reſume my former illuſtration), appears in the minuteſt action, and improves the moſt inconſiderable geſture; ſo *grace* is diſcovered in the placing even of a ſingle word, or the turn of a mere expletive. Neither is this inexpreſſible quality confined to one ſpecies of compoſition only, but extends to all the various kinds; to the humble paſtoral as well as to the

lofty Epic; from the ſlighteſt letter to the moſt ſolemn diſcourſe.

I KNOW not whether Sir William Temple may not be conſidered as the firſt of our proſe authors, who introduced a graceful *manner* into our language. At leaſt that quality does not ſeem to have appeared early, or ſpread far, amongſt us. But whereſoever we may look for its origin, it is certainly to be found in its higheſt perfection in the eſſays of a gentleman whoſe writings will be diſtinguiſhed ſo long as politeneſs and good-ſenſe have any admirers. That becoming air which Tully eſteemed the criterion of fine compoſition, and which every reader, he ſays, imagines ſo eaſy to be imitated, yet will find ſo difficult to attain, is the prevailing characteriſtic of all that excellent author's moſt elegant performances. In a word, one may juſtly apply to him what Plato, in his allegorical language, ſays of Ariſtophanes; that the *Graces* having ſearched all the world round for a temple wherein they might for ever dwell, ſettled at laſt in the breaſt of Mr. Addiſon. Adieu. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXX.

To CLYTANDER.

CAN it then be true, Clytander, that after all the fine things which have been ſaid concerning the love of our Country, it owes its riſe to the principles you mention, and was originally propagated among mankind in order to cheat them into the ſervice of the community? And is it thus, at laſt, that the moſt generous of the human paſſions, inſtead of bearing the ſacred ſignature of nature, can produce no higher marks of its legitimacy than the ſuſpicious impreſs of art? The queſtion is worth, at leaſt, a few thoughts; and I will juſt run over the principal objections in your letter, without drawing them up, however, in a regular form.

THAT the true happineſs of the individual cannot ariſe from the ſingle exerciſe of the mere ſelfiſh principles, is evident, I think, above all reaſonable contradiction. If a man would thoroughly enjoy his own being, he muſt of neceſſity look beyond it; his private ſatisfactions always encreaſing in the

the ſame proportion with which he promotes thoſe of others. Thus ſelf-intereſt, if rightly directed, flows thro the nearer charities of relations, friends, and dependents, till it riſes, and dilates itſelf into general benevolence. But if every addition which we make to the welfare of others, be really an advancement of our own; the love of our country muſt neceſſarily, upon a principle of ſelf-intereſt, be a paſſion founded in the ſtricteſt reaſon: becauſe it is a diſpoſition pregnant with the greateſt poſſible good, which the limited powers of man are capable of producing. Benevolence, therefore, points to our country, as to her only adequate mark: whatever falls ſhort of that glorious end, is too ſmall for her full gratification; and all beyond is too immenſe for her graſp.

THUS our country appears to have a claim to our affection, as it has a correſpondent paſſion in the human breaſt: a paſſion, not raiſed by the artifices of policy, or propagated by the infection of enthuſiaſm, but neceſſarily reſulting from the original conſtitution of our ſpecies, and conducive to the higheſt *private* advantage of each

each individual. When Curtius, therefore, or the two Decii, ſacrificed their lives, in order to reſcue their community from the calamities with which it was threatened; they were by no means impelled (as you ſeemed to repreſent them) by a political phrenzy, but acted on the moſt ſolid and rational principles. The method, they purſued for that purpoſe, was dictated, I confeſs, by the moſt abſurd and groundleſs ſuperſtition: yet while the impreſſion of that national belief remained ſtrong upon their minds, and they were thoroughly perſuaded, that falling in the manner we are aſſured they did, was the only effectual means of preſerving their country from ruin; they took the moſt rational meaſures of conſulting their private happineſs, by thus conſenting to become the public victims. Could it even be admitted (what, with any degree of probability, never, indeed, can be admitted) that theſe glorious heroes conſidered fame as the vaineſt of ſhadows, and had no hopes of an after-life in any other ſcene of exiſtence; ſtill however their conduct might be juſtified as perfectly wiſe. For, ſurely, to a mind that was not wholly immerſed

immerſed in the loweſt dregs of the moſt contracted ſelfiſhneſs; that had not totally extinguiſhed every generous and ſocial affection; the thoughts of having preferred a mere joyleſs exiſtence (for ſuch it muſt have been) to the ſuppoſed preſervation of numbers of one's fellow creatures, muſt have been far more painful than a thouſand deaths.

I CANNOT, however, but agree with you, that this affection was productive of infinite miſchief to mankind, as it broke out among the Romans, in the impious ſpirit of their unjuſt conqueſts. But it ſhould be remembered, at the ſame time, that it is the uſual artifice of ambition, to maſk herſelf in the ſemblance of patriotiſm. And it can be no juſt objection to the nobleſt of the ſocial paſſions, that it is capable of being inflamed beyond its natural heat, and turned, by the arts of policy, to promote thoſe deſtructive purpoſes, which it was originally implanted to prevent.

THIS zeal for our country may, indeed, become irrational, not only when it thus puſhes us on to act counter to the natural rights of any other community; but likewiſe

wiſe when it impels us to take the meaſures of violence in oppoſition to the general ſenſe of our own. For may not public happineſs be eſtimated by the ſame ſtandard as that of private? and as every man's own opinion muſt determine his particular ſatisfaction; ſhall not the general opinion be conſidered as deciſive in the queſtion concerning general intereſt? Far am I, however, from inſinuating, that the true welfare of mankind in their collective capacities depends ſingly upon a prevailing fancy, any more than it does in their ſeparate: undoubtedly in both inſtances they may equally embrace a falſe intereſt. But whenever this is the caſe, I ſhould hardly imagine that the love of our country, on the one hand, or of our neighbor, on the other, would juſtify any methods of bringing them to a wiſer choice, than thoſe of calm and rational perſuaſion.

I CANNOT at preſent recollect which of the antient authors it is, that mentions the Cappadocians to have been ſo enamored of ſubjection to a deſpotic power, as to refuſe the enjoyment of their liberties, tho generouſly tendered to them by the Romans.

Scarcely,

Scarcely, I ſuppoſe, can there be an inſtance produced of a more remarkable depravity of national taſte, and of a more falſe calculation of public welfare: yet even in this inſtance it ſhould ſeem the higheſt injuſtice to have attempted by force, and at the expence, perhaps, of half the lives in the ſtate, the introduction of a more improved ſyſtem of government.

In this notion I am not ſingular, but have the authority of Plato himſelf on my ſide, who held it as a maxim of undoubted truth in politics, that the prevailing ſentiments of a ſtate, how much ſoever miſtaken, ought by no means to be oppoſed by the meaſures of violence: a maxim, which if certain pretended or miſguided patriots had happily embraced, much effuſion of civil blood had been lately ſpared to our nation. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXI.

To PALAMEDES.

Nov. 4, 1740.

THE dawn is overcaſt, the morning lours,
And heavily with clouds brings on the day.

How then can I better diſappoint the gloomy effects of a louring ſky, than by calling my thoughts off from the dull ſcene before me, and placing them upon an object which I always conſider with pleaſure? Much, certainly, are we indebted to that happy faculty, by which, with a ſort of magic power, we can bring before one's mind whatever has been the ſubject of its moſt agreable contemplation. In vain, therefore, would that lovely dame, who has ſo often been the topic of our converſations, pretend to enjoy you to herſelf: in ſpite of your favorite philoſophy, or even of a more powerful divinity; in ſpight of Fortune herſelf, I can place you in my view, tho half a century of miles lies between us. But am I for ever to be indebted to imagination only for your preſence? and will you not ſometimes let me owe that pleaſure to your-

yourſelf? Surely you might ſpare me a few weeks before the ſummer ends, without any inconvenience to that noble plan upon which I know you are ſo intent. As for my own ſtudies, they go on but ſlowly: I am, like a traveller without a guide in an unknown country, obliged to enquire the way at every turning, and conſequently cannot advance with all the expedition I could wiſh. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXII.

To the ſame.

Auguſt 10, 1745.

FORGIVE me, Palamades, if I miſtruſt an art, which the greateſt of philoſophers has called the art of deceiving, and by which the firſt of orators could perſuade the people that he had conquered at the athletic games, tho they ſaw him fall at his adverſary's feet. The voice of Eloquence ſhould ever, indeed, be heard with caution; and ſhe, whoſe boaſt it has formerly been, to make little things appear conſiderable, may diminiſh objects, perhaps, as

as well as enlarge them, and leſſen even the charms of repoſe. But I have too long experienced the joys of retirement, to quit her arms for a more lively miſtreſs; and I can look upon ambition, tho adorned in all the ornaments of your oratory, with the cool indifference of the moſt confirmed Stoic. To confeſs the whole truth, I am too proud to endure a repulſe, and too humble to hope for ſucceſs: qualities little favorable, I imagine, to the pretenſions of him who would claim the glittering prizes, which animate thoſe that run the race of ambition. Let thoſe honors, then, you mention, be inſcribed on the tombs of others; be it rather told on mine, that I lived and died

Unplac'd, unpenſion'd, no man's heir or ſlave.

And is not this a privilege as valuable as any of thoſe which you have painted to my view, in all the warmeſt colors of your enlivening eloquence? Bruyere, at leaſt, has juſt now aſſured me, that " to pay one's " court to no man, nor expect any to " pay court to you, is the moſt agreable " of all ſituations; it is the true golden

" age, ſays he, and the moſt natural ſtate " of man."

BELIEVE me, however, I am not in the miſtake of thoſe whom you juſtly condemn, as imagining that wiſdom is the companion only of retirement, and that virtue enters not the more open and conſpicuous walks of life: but I will confeſs at the ſame time, that tho it is to Tully I give my applauſe, it is Atticus that has my affection.

" LIFE, ſays a celebrated antient, may be " compared to the Olympic games: ſome " enter into thoſe aſſemblies for glory, and " others for gain; while there is a third " party (and thoſe by no means the moſt " contemptible) who chooſe to be merely " ſpectators." I need not tell you, Palamedes, how early it was my inclination to be numbered with the laſt; and as nature has not formed me with powers, am I not obliged to her for having diveſted me of every inclination, for bearing a part in the ambitious contentions of the world? Providence, indeed, ſeems to have deſigned ſome tempers for the obſcure ſcenes of life; as there are ſome plants which flouriſh beſt in the ſhade. But the loweſt ſhrub has its

uſe, you are ſenſible, as well as the loftieſt oak; and, perhaps, your friend may find ſome method of convincing you, that even the humbleſt talents are not given in vain. Farewel. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXIII.

To PALEMON.

May 28, 1748.

Is it poſſible you can thus deſcend from the higheſt concerns to the loweſt, and, after deliberating upon the affairs of Europe, have the humility to enquire into mine? But the greateſt ſtateſmen, it ſeems, have their trifling as well as their ſerious hours; and I have read of a Roman conſul that amuſed himſelf with gathering cockle-ſhells, and of a Spartan monarch who was found riding upon a hobby horſe. Or ſhall I rather ſay, that friendſhip gilds every object upon which ſhe ſhines? As it is the ſingular character of Palemon to preſerve that generous flame in all its ſtrength and luſtre amidſt that ambitious atmoſphere, which

is generally eſteemed ſo unfavourable to every brighter affection.

It is upon one or other of thoſe principles alone, that you can be willing to ſuſpend your own more important engagements, by attending to an account of mine, They have lately, indeed, been more diverſified than uſual, and I have paſſed theſe three months in a continual ſucceſſion of new ſcenes. The moſt agreable, as well as the fartheſt part of my progreſs, was to the ſeat of Hortenſius; and I am perſuaded you will not think my travels have been in vain, ſince they afford me an opportunity of informing you, that our friend is in poſſeſſion of all that happineſs which I am ſure you wiſh him. It is probable, however, you have not yet heard that he owes the chief part of it to female merit; for his marriage was concluded even before thoſe friends, who are moſt frequently with him, had the leaſt ſuſpicion of his intentions. But tho he had ſome reaſons for concealing his deſigns, he has none for being aſhamed of them now they are executed. I ſay not this from any haſty approbation, but as having long known and eſteemed the lady whom he has choſen:

choſen: and as there is a pleaſure in bringing two perſons of merit to the knowledge of each other, will you allow me, in the remainder of this letter, to introduce her to your acquaintance?

HORTENSIA is of a good ſtature, and perfectly well proportioned; but one cannot ſo properly ſay her air is genteel, as that it is pleaſing: for there is a certain unaffected careleſneſs in her dreſs and mien, that wins by degrees rather than ſtrikes at firſt ſight. If you were to look no farther than the upper part of her face, you would think her handſome; were you only to examine the lower, you would immediately pronounce the reverſe; yet there is ſomething in her eyes, which, without any pretence to be called fine, gives ſuch an agreable livelineſs to her whole countenance, that you ſcarce obſerve, or ſoon forget, all her features are not regular. Her converſation is rather chearful than gay, and more inſtructive than ſprightly. But the principal and moſt diſtinguiſhed faculties of her mind are her memory and her judgment, both which ſhe poſſeſſes in a far higher degree than one uſually finds even in perſons of our ſex. She

has read moſt of the capital authors both in French and Engliſh; but her chief and favorite companions of that kind have lain among the hiſtorical and dramatic writers. There is hardly a remarkable event in antient or modern ſtory, of which ſhe cannot give a very clear and judicious account; as ſhe is equally well verſed in all the principal characters and incidents of the moſt approved ſtage-compoſitions. The mathematics is not wholly a ſtranger to her; and tho ſhe did not think proper to purſue her enquiries of that kind, to any great length; yet the very uncommon facility with which ſhe entered into the reaſonings of that ſcience, plainly diſcovered ſhe was capable of attaining a thorough knowledge of all its moſt abſtruſe branches. Her taſte in performances of polite literature is always juſt; and ſhe is an excellent critic, without knowing any thing of the artificial rules of that ſcience. Her obſervations, therefore, upon ſubjects of that ſort, are ſo much the more to be relied upon, as they are the pure and unbiaſſed dictates of nature and good-ſenſe. Accordingly Hortenſius, in the ſeveral pieces, which, you know, he has

has publiſhed, conſtantly had recourſe to her judgment; and I have often heard him upon thoſe occaſions apply, with ſingular pleaſure, and with equal truth, what the tender Propertius ſays of his favorite Cynthia:

Me juvat in gremio doctæ legiſſe puellæ,
Auribus et puris ſcripta probaſſe mea:
Hæc ubi contigerint, populi confuſa valeto
Fabula; nam, domina judice, tutus ero.

But her uncommon ſtrength of underſtanding has preſerved her from that fatal rock of all female knowledge, the impertinent oſtentation of it: and ſhe thinks a reſerve in this article an eſſential part of that modeſty which is the ornament of her ſex. I have heard her obſerve, that it is not in the acquired endowments of the female mind, as in the beauties of her perſon, where it may be ſufficient praiſe, perhaps, to follow the example of the virgin deſcribed by Taſſo, who,

Non copre ſue bellezze, e non l'eſpoſe.

On the contrary ſhe eſteems it a point of decency to throw a veil over the ſuperior

charms of her underſtanding: and if ever ſhe draws it aſide, you plainly perceive it is rather to gratify her good-nature than her vanity; leſs in compliance with her own inclinations, than with thoſe of her company.

HER refined ſenſe and extenſive knowledge have not, however, raiſed her above the more neceſſary acquiſitions of female ſcience: they have only taught her to fill that part of her character with higher grace and dignity. She enters into all the domeſtic duties of her ſtation, with the moſt conſummate ſkill and prudence. Her œconomical deportment is calm and ſteddy; and ſhe preſides over her family like the Intelligence of ſome planetary orb, conducting it in all its proper directions without violence or diſturbed efforts.

THESE qualities, however conſiderable they might appear in a leſs ſhining character, are but under parts in Hortenſia's: for it is from the virtues of her heart that ſhe derives her moſt irreſiſtible claim to eſteem and approbation. A conſtant flow of uniform and unaffected chearfulneſs gladdens her own breaſt, and enlivens that of every

every creature around her. Her behavior under the injuries ſhe has received (for injuries even the blameleſs Hortenſia has received) was with all the calm fortitude of the moſt heroic patience; as ſhe firmly relied, that Providence would either put an end to her misfortunes, or ſupport her under them. And with that elevated hope ſhe ſeemed to feel leſs for herſelf, than for the unjuſt and inhuman author of her ſufferings, generouſly lamenting to ſee one, ſo nearly related to her, ſtand condemned by that ſevereſt and moſt ſignificant of ſentences, the united reproaches of the world and of his conſcience.

THUS, Palemon, I have given you a faithful copy of an excellent original: but whether you will join with me in thinking my pencil has been true to its ſubject, muſt be left to ſome future opportunity to determine. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER XXXIV.

To HORTENSIUS.

Dec. 10, 1730.

I HAVE read over the treatiſe you recommended to me, with attention and concern. I was ſorry to find an author, who ſeems ſo well qualified to ſerve the cauſe of truth, employing his talents in favor of what appears to me a moſt dangerous error. I have often wondered, indeed, at the policy of certain philoſophers of this caſt, who endeavor to advance religion by depreciating human nature. Methinks it would be more for the intereſt of virtue, to repreſent her congenial (as congenial ſhe ſurely is) with our make, and agreable to our untainted conſtitution of ſoul; to prove that every deviation from moral rectitude is an oppoſition to our native biaſs, and contrary to thoſe characters of dignity which the Creator has univerſally impreſſed upon the mind. This, at leaſt, was the principle which many of the antient philoſophers labored to inculcate; as there is not, perhaps, any ſingle topic in ethics that might be

be urged with more truth or greater efficacy.

It is upon this generous and exalted notion of our ſpecies, that one of the nobleſt precepts of the excellent Pythagoras is founded: Παντων δε μαλιστα (ſays that philoſopher) αισχυνεο σ'αυτον. The firſt and leading diſpoſition to engage us on the ſide of virtue was, in that ſage's eſtimation, to preſerve above all things a conſtant reverence to our own mind, and to dread nothing ſo much as to offend againſt its native dignity. The ingenious Mr. Norris, I remember, recommends this precept as one of the beſt, perhaps, that was ever given to the world. May one not juſtly then be ſurprized to find it ſo ſeldom enforced in our modern ſyſtems of morality? To confeſs the truth, I am ſtrongly inclined to ſuſpect, that much of that general contempt of every manly principle, which ſo remarkably diſtinguiſhes the preſent times, may fairly be attributed to the humor of diſcarding this animating notion of our kind. It has been the faſhion to paint human nature in the harſheſt and moſt unpleaſing colors. Yet there is not, ſurely, any argument more likely to induce a man

a man to act unworthily, than to perſuade him that he has nothing of innate worthineſs in his genuine diſpoſition; than to reaſon him out of every elevated notion of his own grandeur of ſoul; and to deſtroy, in ſhort, every motive that might juſtly inſpire him with a principle of ſelf-reverence; that ſureſt *internal* guard Heaven ſeems to have aſſigned to the human virtues. Farewel. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXV.

To CLEORA.

THO it was not poſſible for me to celebrate with you, as uſual, that happy anniverſary which we have ſo many reaſons to commemorate; yet I could not ſuffer ſo joyful a feſtival to paſs by me without a thouſand tender reflections. I took pleaſure in tracing back that ſtream to its riſe, which has colored all my ſucceeding days with happineſs; as my Cleora, perhaps, was at that very inſtant, running over in her own mind, thoſe many moments of calm ſatisfaction which ſhe has derived from the ſame ſource.

My heart was ſo entirely poſſeſſed with the ſentiments which this occaſion ſuggeſted, that I found myſelf raiſed into a ſort of poetical enthuſiaſm; and I could not forbear expreſſing in verſe, what I have often ſaid in proſe of the dear author of my moſt valuable enjoyments. As I imagined Teraminta would by this time be with you, I had a view to her harpſicord in the compoſition; and I deſire you would let her know I hope ſhe will ſhew me, at my return, to what advantage the moſt ordinary numbers will appear, when judiciouſly accompanied with a fine voice and inſtrument.

I must not forget to tell you, it was in your favorite grove, which we have ſo often traverſed together, that I indulged myſelf in theſe pleaſing reveries; as it was not, you are to ſuppoſe, without having firſt invoked the Genius of the place, and called upon the Muſes in due form, that I broke out in the following rhapſody.

ODE

ODE for MUSIC.

AIR I.

Thrice has the circling earth, ſwift-pacing, run,
And thrice again, around the ſun,
Since firſt the white-rob'd prieſt, with ſacred band,
Sweet union! join'd us hand in hand.

CHORUS.

All Heav'n, and ev'ry friendly pow'r
Approv'd the vow, and bleſs'd the hour.

RECITATIVE.

What tho in ſilence ſacred Hymen trod,
Nor lyre proclaim'd, nor garland crown'd the god:
What tho nor feaſt nor revel dance was there,
(Vain pomp of joy the happy well may ſpare!)
Yet love unfeign'd, and conſcious honor led
The ſpotleſs virgin to the bridal bed;
Rich tho deſpoil'd *of all her little ſtore;*
For who ſhall ſeize *fair virtue's better dow'r?*

AIR II.

Bleſt with ſenſe, with temper bleſt,
Wiſdom o'er thy lips preſides;
Virtue guards thy gen'rous breaſt,
Kindneſs all thy actions guides.

AIR

AIR III.

Ev'ry home-felt bliſs is mine,
Ev'ry matron-grace is thine;
Chaſte deportment, artleſs mien,
Converſe ſweet, and heart ſerene.

Sinks my ſoul with gloomy pain?
See, ſhe ſmiles! — 'tis joy again:
Swells a paſſion in my breaſt?
Hark, ſhe ſpeaks! and all is reſt.

Oft as clouds my paths o'erſpread
(Doubtful where my ſteps ſhould tread)
She, with judgment's ſteddy ray,
Marks, and ſmooths, the better way.

CHORUS.

Chief amongſt ten thouſand ſhe,
Worthy, ſacred Hymen! thee.

WHILE ſuch are the ſentiments which I entertain of my Cleora, can I find myſelf obliged to be thus diſtant from her, without the higheſt regret? The truth, believe me, is, tho both the company and the ſcene wherein I am engaged, are extremely agreable, yet I find a vacancy in my happineſs, which none but you can fill up. Surely thoſe who have recommended theſe little

ſeparations

ſeparations as neceſſary to revive the languor of the married ſtate, have ill underſtood its moſt refined gratifications: there is no ſatiety in the mutual exchange of tender offices.

THERE ſeems to have been a time, when a happineſs of this kind was conſidered as the higheſt glory, as well as the ſupreme bleſſing of human life. I remember, when I was in Italy, to have ſeen ſeveral conjugal inſcriptions upon the ſepulchral monuments of antient Rome, which, inſtead of running out into a pompous panegyric upon the virtues of the deceaſed, mentioned ſingly, as the moſt ſignificant of encomiums, how many years the parties had lived together in full and uninterrupted harmony. The Romans, indeed, in this, as in many other inſtances, afford the moſt remarkable examples; and it is an obſervation of one of their writers, that, notwithſtanding divorces might very eaſily be obtained among them, their republic had ſubſiſted many centuries before there was a ſingle inſtance of that privilege ever having been exerted. Thus, my Cleora, you ſee, however unfaſhionable I may appear in the preſent generation, I might

might have been kept in countenance in a former; and by thoſe too, who had as much true gallantry and good-ſenſe as one uſually meets with in this.—But affections which are founded in truth and nature ſtand not in need of any precedent to ſupport them; and I eſteem it my honor no leſs than my happineſs, that I am, &c.

LETTER XXXVI.

To CLYTANDER.

DID you imagine I was really in earneſt when I talked of quitting *** and withdrawing from thoſe gilded proſpects which ambition had once ſo ſtrongly ſet in my view? But my vows, you ſee, are not in the number of thoſe which are made to be broken: for the retreat I had long meditated, is now, at laſt, happily executed. To ſay truth, my friend, the longer I lived in the high ſcenes of action, the more I was convinced that nature had not formed me for bearing a part in them: and tho I was once ſo unexperienced in the

ways of the world as to believe I had talents, as I was ſure I had inclination, to ſerve my country, yet every day's converſation contributed to wean me by degrees from that flattering deluſion.

How ineded could a man hope to render himſelf acceptable to the various parties which divide our nation, who profeſſes it as his principle, that there is no ſtriking wholly into the meaſures of any, without renouncing either one's ſenſe or one's integrity? and yet, as the world is at preſent conſtituted, it is ſcarce poſſible, I fear, to do any good in one's generation (in public life I mean) without liſting under ſome or other of thoſe various banners, which diſtinguiſh the ſeveral corps in theſe our political warfares. To thoſe, therefore, who may have curioſity enough to enter into my concerns, and aſk a reaſon for my quitting the town, I anſwer, in the words of the hiſtorian, *Civitatis morum tædet pigetque.* —But I am wandering from the purpoſe of my letter, which was not ſo much to juſtify my retreat, as to incline you to follow me into it: to follow me, I mean, as a viſitor only; for I love my country too well

well to call you off from thoſe great ſervices you are capable of doing her.

I HAVE pitched my tent upon a ſpot which I am perſuaded will not diſpleaſe you. My villa (if you will allow me to call by that fine name, what, in truth, is no better than a neat farm-houſe) is ſituated upon a gentle riſe, which commands a ſhort, tho agreable view of about three miles in circumference. This is bounded on the north by a ridge of hills, which afford me at once both a ſecure ſhelter and a beautiful proſpect; for they are as well cultivated as the moſt fertile valleys. In the front of my houſe, which ſtands ſouth-eaſt, I have a view of the river that runs, at the diſtance of ſomewhat leſs than a quarter of a mile, at the end of my grounds; and after making ſeveral windings and returns, ſeems to loſe itſelf at the foot of thoſe hills I juſt now mentioned. As for my garden, I am obliged to nature for its chief beauties; having no other (except a ſmall ſpot which I have allotted for the purpoſes of my table) but what the fields and meadows afford. Theſe, however, I have embelliſhed with ſome care, having intermixed among the

hedges all the ſeveral ſort of flowering ſhrubs.

BUT I muſt not forget to mention what I look upon to be the principal ornament of the place; as indeed I do not recollect to have ſeen any thing of the kind in our Engliſh plantations. I have covered a ſmall ſpot with different ſorts of ever-greens, many of which are of a ſpecies not very uſual in our country. This little plantation I have branched out into various labyrinth-walks, which are all terminated by a ſmall temple in the centre. I have a double advantage from this artificial wood: for it not only affords me a very ſhady retreat in ſummer, but, as it is ſituated oppoſite to my library, ſupplies me in winter with a perſpective of the moſt agreable verdure imaginable.

WHAT heightens my reliſh of this retirement, is the company of my Cleora; as indeed many of the beſt improvements I have made in it, are owing to hints which I have received from her exquiſite taſte and judgment. She will rejoice to receive you as her gueſt here; and has given it me in charge to remind you, that you have promiſed to be ſo. As the buſineſs of parliament

ment is now drawing to a concluſion, I may urge this to you without any imputation upon my patriotiſm; tho at the ſame time I muſt add, I make a very conſiderable ſacrifice of private intereſt whenever I reſign you for the ſake of the publick. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXVII.

To HORTENSIUS.

ARE you aware, Hortenſius, how far I may miſlead you, when you are willing to reſign yourſelf to my guidance, thro the regions of criticiſm? Remember, however, that I take the lead in theſe paths, not in confidence of my own ſuperior knowledge of them, but in compliance with a requeſt, which I never yet knew how to refuſe. In ſhort, Hortenſius, I give you my ſentiments, becauſe it is my ſentiments you require: but I give them at the ſame time rather as doubts than deciſions.

AFTER having thus acknowledged my inſufficiency for the office you have aſſigned me, I will venture to confeſs that the poet

who has gained over your approbation, has been far leſs ſucceſsful with mine. I have ever thought, with a very celebrated modern writer, that

Le vers le mieux rempli, la plus noble penſée,
Ne peut plaire à l'eſprit quand l'oreille eſt bleſsée. BOILEAU.

Thus, tho I admit there is both wit in the raillery, and ſtrength in the ſentiments of your friend's moral epiſtle, it by no means falls in with thoſe notions I have formed to myſelf, concerning the eſſential requiſites in compoſitions of this kind. He ſeems, indeed, to have widely deviated from the model he profeſſes to have had in view, and is no more like Horace, than *Hyperion to a Satire.* His deficiency in point of verſification, not to mention his want of elegance in the general manner of his poem, is ſufficient to deſtroy the pretended reſemblance. Nothing, in truth, can be more abſurd, than to write in poetical meaſure, and yet neglect harmony; as of all the kinds of falſe ſtyle, that which is neither proſe nor verſe, but I know not what inartificial combination of powerleſs words bordered

bordered with rhyme, is far, ſurely, the moſt inſufferable.

But you are of opinion, I perceive (and it is an opinion in which you are not ſingular) that a negligence of this kind may be juſtified by the authority of the Roman ſatiriſt: yet ſurely thoſe who entertain that notion, have not thoroughly attended either to the precepts or the practice of Horace. He has attributed, I confeſs, his ſatirical compoſition to the inſpiration of a certain Muſe, whom he diſtinguiſhes by the title of the *Muſa pedeſtris:* and it is this expreſſion which ſeems to have miſled the generality of his imitators. But tho he will not allow her to fly, he by no means intends ſhe ſhould creep: on the contrary, it may be ſaid of the Muſe of Horace, as of the eve of Milton, that

grace is in all her ſteps.

That this was the idea which Horace himſelf had of her, is evident, not only from the general air which prevails in his ſatires and epiſtles, but from ſeveral expreſs declarations, which he lets fall in his progreſs thro them. Even when he ſpeaks of her in his

greateſt fits of modeſty, and deſcribes her as exhibited in his own moral writings, he particularly inſiſts upon the eaſe and harmony of her motions. Tho he humbly diſclaims, indeed, all pretenſions to the higher poetry, the *acer ſpiritus et vis*, as he calls it; he repreſents his ſtyle as being governed by the *tempora certa modoſque*, as flowing with a certain regular and agreable cadence. Accordingly, we find him particularly condemning his predeceſſor Lucilius for the diſſonance of his numbers; and he profeſſes to have made the experiment, whether the ſame kind of moral ſubjects might not be treated in more ſoft and eaſy meaſures:

Quid vetat et noſmet Lucili ſcripta legentes,
Quærere num illius, num rerum dura negarit
Verſiculos natura magis factos et euntes
Mollius?

The truth is, a tuneful cadence is the ſingle prerogative of poetry which he pretends to claim to his writings of this kind: and ſo far is he from thinking it uneſſential, that he acknowledged it as the only ſeparation which diſtinguiſhes them from proſe. If that were once to be broken down, and the

the muſical order of his words deſtroyed, there would not, he tells us, be the leaſt appearance of poetry remaining:

Non
Invenias etiam diſjecti membra poetæ.

However, when he delivers himſelf in this humble ſtrain, he is not, you will obſerve, ſketching out a plan of this ſpecies of poetry in general; but ſpeaking merely of his own performances in particular. His demands riſe much higher, when he informs us what he expects of thoſe, who would ſucceed in compoſitions of this moral kind. He then, not only requires flowing numbers, but an expreſſion conciſe and unincumbered; wit exerted with good-breeding, and managed with reſerve; as upon ſome occaſions the ſentiments may be enforced with all the ſtrength of eloquence and poetry: and tho in ſome parts the piece may appear with a more ſerious and ſolemn caſt of coloring, yet upon the whole, he tells us, it muſt be lively and *riant*. This I take to be his meaning in the following paſſage:

Eſt

Eſt brevitate opus, ut currat ſententia, neu ſe
Impediat verbis laſſas onerantibus aures;
Et ſermone opus eſt modo triſti, ſæpe jocoſo,
Defendente vicem modo rhetoris atque poetæ;
Interdum urbani, parcentis viribus atque
Extenuantis eas conſulto.

Such, then, was the notion which Horace had of this kind of writing. And if there is any propriety in theſe his rules, if they are founded on the truth of taſte and art; I fear the performance in queſtion, with numberleſs others of the ſame ſtamp (which have not however wanted admirers) muſt inevitably ſtand condemned. The truth of it is, moſt of the pieces which are uſually produced upon this plan, rather give one an image of Lucilius, than of Horace: the authors of them ſeem to miſtake the aukward negligence of the favorite of Scipio, for the eaſy air of the friend of Mæcenas.

You will ſtill tell me, perhaps, that the example of Horace himſelf is an unanſwerable objection to the notion I have embraced; as there are numberleſs lines in his ſatires and epiſtles, where the verſification is evidently neglected. But are you ſure,

Hortenſius, that thoſe lines which ſound ſo unharmonious to a modern ear, had the ſame effect upon a Roman one? For myſelf, at leaſt, I am much inclined to believe the contrary: and it ſeems highly incredible, that he who had ventured to cenſure Lucilius for the uncouthneſs of his numbers, ſhould himſelf be notoriouſly guilty of the very fault, againſt which he ſo ſtrongly exclaims. Moſt certain it is, that the delicacy of the ancients with reſpect to numbers, was far ſuperior to any thing that modern taſte can pretend to; and that they diſcovered differences, which are to us abſolutely imperceptible. To mention only one remarkable inſtance: A very antient writer has obſerved upon the following verſe in Virgil,

Arma virumque cano, Trojæ qui primus ab oris.

that if inſtead of *primus* we were to pronounce it *primis* (*is* being long, and *us* ſhort) the entire harmony of the line would be deſtroyed. But whoſe ear is now ſo exquiſitely ſenſible, as to perceive the diſtinction between thoſe two quantities?

Some

Some refinement of this kind might probably give muſic to thoſe lines in Horace, which now ſeem ſo untuneable.

In ſubjects of this nature it is not poſſible, perhaps, to expreſs one's ideas in any very preciſe and determinate manner. I will only therefore in general obſerve with reſpect to the requiſite ſtyle of theſe performances, that it conſiſts in a natural eaſe of expreſſion, an elegant familiarity of phraſe, which tho formed of the moſt uſual terms of language, has yet a grace and energy, no leſs ſtriking than that of a more elevated diction. There is a certain lively coloring peculiar to compoſitions in this way, which, without being ſo bright and glowing as is neceſſary for the higher poetry, is nevertheleſs equally removed from whatever appears harſh and dry. But particular inſtances will perhaps better illuſtrate my meaning, that any thing I can farther ſay to explain it. There is ſcarce a line in the moral epiſtles of Mr. Pope, which might not be produced for this purpoſe. I chooſe however, to lay before you the following verſes, not as preferring them to many others which might be quoted from that inimitable

able ſatiriſt; but as they afford me an opportunity of comparing them with a verſion of the ſame original lines, of which they are an imitation; and, by that means, of ſhewing you at one view what I conceive is, and is not, in the true manner of Horace:

Peace is my dear delight,—not Fleury's more;
But touch me, and no miniſter ſo ſore:
Whoe'er offends, at ſome unlucky time,
Slides into verſe, and hitches in a rhyme;
Sacred to ridicule his whole life long,
And the ſad burden of ſome merry ſong.

I will refer you to your own memory for the Latin paſſage, from whence Mr. Pope has taken the general hint of theſe verſes; and content myſelf with adding a tranſlation of the lines from Horace by another hand:

Behold me blameleſs bard, how fond of peace!
But he who hurts me (nay, I will be heard)
Had better take a lion by the beard;
His eyes ſhall weep the folly of his tongue,
By laughing crouds in rueful ballad ſung.

There is a ſtrength and ſpirit in the former of theſe paſſages, and a flatneſs and languor

in the latter, which cannot fail of being diſcovered by every reader of the leaſt delicacy of diſcernment: and yet the words which compoſe them both, are equally ſounding and ſignificant. The rules then, which I juſt now mentioned from Horace, will point out the real cauſe of the different effects which theſe two paſſages produce in our minds; as the paſſages themſelves will ſerve to confirm the truth and juſtice of the rules. In the lines from Mr. Pope, one of the principal beauties will be found to conſiſt in the ſhortneſs of the expreſſion; whereas the ſentiments in the other are too much incumbered with words. Thus, for inſtance,

Peace is my dear delight,

is pleaſing, becauſe it is conciſe; as

Behold me blameleſs bard, how fond of peace!

is, in compariſon of the former, the *verba laſſas onerantia aures*. Another diſtinguiſhing perfection in the imitator of Horace, is that ſpirit of gaiety which he has diffuſed thro theſe lines, not to mention thoſe happy, tho familiar, images of *ſliding* into

to verſe, and *hitching* in a rhyme; which can never be ſufficiently admired. But the tranſlator, on the contrary, has caſt too ſerious an air over his numbers, and appears with an emotion and earneſtneſs that diſappoints the force of his ſatire:

Nay, I will be heard,

has the mein of a man in a paſſion; and

His eyes ſhall weep the folly of his tongue:

tho a good line in itſelf, is much too ſolemn and tragical for the undiſturbed pleaſantry of Horace.

But I need not enter more minutely into an examination of theſe paſſages. The general hints I have thrown out in this letter will ſuffice to ſhew you wherein I imagine the true manner of Horace conſiſts. And after all, perhaps, it can no more be explained, than acquired, by rules of art. It is what true genius can only execute, and juſt taſte alone diſcover. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXVIII.

To the ſame.

Nov. 7, 1730.

YOUR admired poet, I remember, ſomewhere lays it down as a maxim, that

The proper ſtudy of mankind is man.

There cannot, indeed, be a more uſeful, nor, one ſhould imagine, a more eaſy ſcience: ſo many leſſons of this kind are every moment forcing themſelves upon our obſervation, that it ſhould ſeem ſcarce poſſible not to be well acquainted with the various turns and diſpoſitions of the human heart. And yet there are ſo few who are really adepts in this article, that to ſay of a man, *he knows the world*, is generally eſteemed a compliment of the moſt ſignificant kind.

THE reaſon, perhaps, of the general ignorance which prevails in this ſort of knowledge, may ariſe from our judging too much by univerſal principles. Whereas there

there is a wonderful diſparity in mankind, and numberleſs characters exiſt which cannot properly be reduced to any regular and fixed ſtandard. Monſieur Paſchal obſerves, that the greater ſagacity any man poſſeſſes, the more originals he will diſcern among his ſpecies; as it is the remark of Sir William Temple, that no nation under the ſun abounds with ſo many as our own. Plutarch, if I remember right, is of opinion, that there is a wider difference between the individuals of our own kind, than what is obſervable between creatures of a ſeparate order; while Montaigne (who ſeems to have known human nature perfectly well) ſuppoſes the diſtance to be ſtill more remote, and aſſerts that the diſtinction is much greater between man and man, than between man and beaſt.

The comic writers have not, I think, taken all the advantage they might of this infinite diverſity of humor in the human race. A judicious obſerver of the world might ſingle out abundant materials for ridicule, without having recourſe to thoſe worn-out characters which are for ever returning upon the ſtage. If I were ac-

quainted with any genius in this claſs of writers, I think I could furniſh him with an original, which, if artfully repreſented and connected with proper incidents, might be very ſucceſsfully introduced into comedy. The perſon I have in view is my neighbor Stilotes.

STILOTES in his youth was eſteemed to have good ſenſe and a tolerable taſte for letters; as he gained ſome reputation at the Univerſity in the exerciſes uſual at that place. But as ſoon he was freed from the reſtraint of tutors, the natural reſtleſſneſs of his temper broke out, and he has never, from that time to this, applied himſelf for half an hour together to any ſingle purſuit. He is extremely active in his diſpoſition; but his whole life is one inceſſant whirl of trifles. He riſes, perhaps, with a full intent of amuſing himſelf all the morning with his gun; but before he has got half the length of a field, he recollects that he owes a viſit, which he muſt inſtantly pay: accordingly his horſe is ſaddled, and he ſets out. But in his way he remembers that he has not given proper orders about ſuch a flower, and he muſt abſolutely

ſolutely return, or the whole œconomy of his nurſery will be ruined. Thus, in whatever action you find him engaged, you may be ſure it is the very reverſe of what he propoſed. Yet with all this quickneſs of tranſition and vivacity of ſpirits, he is ſo indolent in every thing that has the air of buſineſs, that he is at leaſt two or three months before he can perſuade himſelf to open any letter he receives: and from the ſame diſpoſition, he has ſuffered the dividends of his ſtocks to run on for many years without receiving a ſhilling of the intereſt. Stilotes is poſſeſſed of an eſtate in Dorſetſhire, but that being the place where his chief buſineſs lies, he chooſes conſtantly to reſide with a friend near London. This perſon ſubmits to his humor and his company, in hopes that Stilotes, will conſider him in his will: but it is more than poſſible, that he will never endure the fatigue of ſigning one. However, having here every thing provided for him but clothes and pocket-money, he lives perfectly to his ſatisfaction, in full employment without any real buſineſs; and while thoſe who look after his eſtate take care to ſupply him with ſuffi-

cient to anſwer thoſe two articles, he is entirely unconcerned as to all the reſt: tho, when he is diſpoſed to appear more than ordinarily important, he will gravely harangue upon the roguery of ſtewards, and complain that his rents will ſcarce maintain him in powder and ſhot half the partridge ſeaſon. In ſhort, Stilotes is one of the moſt extraordinary compounds of indolence and activity that I ever met with; and as I know you have a taſte for curioſities, I preſent you with his character as a rarity that merits a place in your collection. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XXXIX.

To PHIDIPPUS.

TIS well, my friend, that the age of transformation is no more: otherwiſe I ſhould tremble for your ſevere attack upon the Muſes, and expect to ſee the ſtory of your metamorphoſis embelliſh the poetical miracles of ſome modern Ovid. But it is long ſince the fate of the Piërides has gained any credit in the world, and you

you may now, in full ſecurity, contemn the divinities of Parnaſſus, and ſpeak irreverently of the daughters of Jove himſelf. You ſee, nevertheleſs, how highly the antients conceived of them, when they thus repreſented them as the offspring of the great father of gods and men. You reject, I know, this article of the heathen creed: but I may venture, however, to aſſert, that philoſophy will confirm what fable has thus invented, and that the Muſes are, in ſtrict truth, of heavenly extraction.

The charms of the fine arts are, indeed, literally derived from the author of all nature, and founded in the original frame and conſtitution of the human mind. Accordingly, the general principles of *taſte* are common to our whole ſpecies, and ariſe from that internal ſenſe of beauty which every man, in ſome degree at leaſt, evidently poſſeſſes. No rational mind can be ſo wholly void of all perceptions of this ſort, as to be capable of contemplating the various objects that ſurround him, with one equal coldneſs and indifference. There are certain forms which muſt neceſſarily fill the ſoul with agreable ideas; and ſhe is in-

ſtantly determined in her approbation of them, previous to all reaſoning concerning their uſe and convenience. It is upon theſe general principles, that what is called fine taſte in the arts is founded; and conſequently is by no means ſo precarious and unſettled an idea as you chooſe to deſcribe it. The truth is, taſte is nothing more than this univerſal ſenſe of beauty, rendered more exquiſite by genius, and more correct by cultivation: and it is from the ſimple and original ideas of this ſort, that the mind learns to form her judgment of the higher and more complex kinds. Accordingly, the whole circle of the imitative and oratorical arts is governed by the ſame general rules of criticiſm; and to prove the certainty of theſe with reſpect to any one of them, is to eſtabliſh their validity with regard to all the reſt. I will therefore conſider the criterion of taſte in relation only to fine writing.

EACH ſpecies of compoſition has its diſtinct perfections: and it would require a much larger compaſs than a letter affords, to prove their reſpective beauties to be derived from truth and nature; and conſequently reducible to a regular and preciſe ſtandard.

ſtandard. I will only mention therefore thoſe general properties which are eſſential to them all, and without which they muſt neceſſarily be defective in their ſeveral kinds. Theſe, I think, may be comprehended under uniformity in the deſign, variety and reſemblance in the metaphors and ſimilitudes, together with propriety and harmony in the diction. Now ſome or all of theſe qualities conſtantly attend our ideas of beauty, and neceſſarily raiſe that agreeable perception of the mind, in what object ſoever they appear. The charms of fine compoſition then, are ſo far from exiſting only int he heated imagination of an enthuſiaſtic admirer, that they reſult from the conſtitution of nature herſelf. And perhaps the principles of criticiſm are as certain and indiſputable, even as thoſe of the mathematics. Thus, for inſtance, that order is preferable to confuſion, that harmony is more pleaſing than diſſonance, with ſome few other axioms upon which the ſcience is built; are truths which ſtrike at once upon the mind with the ſame force of conviction, as that the whole is greater than any of its parts, or, that if from equals you take away equals,

the remainder will be equal. And in both caſes, the propoſitions which reſt upon theſe plain and obvious maxims, ſeem equally capable of the ſame evidence of demonſtration.

BUT as every intellectual, as well as animal faculty is improved and ſtrengthened by exerciſe; the more the ſoul exerts this her internal ſenſe of beauty upon any particular object, the more ſhe will enlarge and refine her reliſh of that peculiar ſpecies. For this reaſon the works of thoſe great maſters, whoſe performances have been long and generally admired, ſupply a farther criterion of fine taſte, equally fixed and certain as that which is immediately derived from nature herſelf. The truth is, fine writing is only the art of raiſing agreable ſenſations of the intellectual kind; and therefore, as by examining thoſe original forms which are adapted to awaken this perception in the mind, we learn what thoſe qualities are, which conſtitute beauty in general; ſo by obſerving the peculiar conſtruction of thoſe compoſitions of genius which have always pleaſed, we perfect our idea of fine writing in particular. It is this

united

united approbation, in perſons of different ages and of various characters and languages, that Longinus has made the teſt of the true Sublime; and he might with equal juſtice have extended the ſame criterion, to all the inferior excellencies of elegant compoſition. Thus the deference paid to the performances of the great maſters of antiquity, is fixed upon juſt and ſolid reaſons: it is not becauſe Ariſtotle and Horace have given us the rules of criticiſm, that we ſubmit to their authority; it is becauſe thoſe rules are derived from works which have been diſtinguiſhed by the uninterrupted admiration of all the more improved part of mankind from their earlieſt appearance down to this preſent hour. For whatever, thro a long ſeries of ages, has been univerſally eſteemed as beautiful, cannot but be conformable to our juſt and natural ideas of beauty.

THE oppoſition, however, which ſometimes divides the opinions of thoſe whoſe judgments may be ſuppoſed equal and perfect, is urged as a powerful objection againſt the reality of a fixed canon of criticiſm: it is a proof, you think, that after all which

can

can be ſaid of fine taſte, it muſt ultimately be reſolved into the peculiar reliſh of each individual. But this diverſity of ſentiments will not, of itſelf, deſtroy the evidence of the criterion; ſince the ſame effect may be produced by numberleſs other cauſes. A thouſand accidental circumſtances may concur in counteracting the force of the rule, even allowing it to be ever ſo fixed and invariable, when left in its free and uninfluenced ſtate. Not to mention that falſe biaſs which party or perſonal diſlike may fix upon the mind, the moſt unprejudiced critic will find it difficult to diſengage himſelf entirely from thoſe partial affections in favor of particular beauties, to which either the general courſe of his ſtudies, or the peculiar caſt of his temper, may have rendered him moſt ſenſible. But as perfection in any works of genius reſults from the united beauty and propriety of its ſeveral diſtinct parts, and as it is impoſſible that any human compoſition ſhould poſſeſs all thoſe qualities in their higheſt and moſt ſovereign degree; the mind, when ſhe pronounces judgment upon any piece of this ſort, is apt to decide of its merit, as thoſe circumſtances

cumſtances which ſhe moſt admires, either prevail or are deficient. Thus, for inſtance, the excellency of the Roman maſters in painting, conſiſts in beauty of deſign, nobleneſs of attitude, and delicacy of expreſſion; but the charms of good coloring are wanting. On the contrary, the Venetian ſchool is ſaid to have neglected deſign a little too much; but at the ſame time has been more attentive to the grace and harmony of well-diſpoſed lights and ſhades. Now it will be admitted by all admirers of this noble art, that no compoſition of the pencil can be perfect, where either of theſe qualities are abſent; yet the moſt accompliſhed judge may be ſo particularly ſtruck with one or other of theſe excellencies, in preference to the reſt, as to be influenced in his cenſure or applauſe of the whole tablature, by the predominancy or deficiency of his favorite beauty. Something of this kind (where the meaner prejudices do not operate) is ever, I am perſuaded, the occaſion of that diverſity of ſentences which we occaſionally hear pronounced by the moſt improved judges, on the ſame piece. But this only ſhews, that much caution is

neceſſary

neceſſary to give a fine taſte its full and unobſtructed effect; not that it is in itſelf uncertain and precarious. I am, &c.

LETTER XL.

To PALAMEDES.

YOUR reſolution to decline thoſe overtures of acquaintance which Mezentius, it ſeems, has lately made to you, is agreable to the refined principles which have ever influenced your conduct. A man of your elegant notions of integrity will obſerve the ſame delicacy with reſpect to his companions, as Cæſar did with regard to his wife, and refuſe all commerce with perſons even but of ſuſpected honor. It would not, indeed, be doing juſtice to Mezentius, to repreſent him in that number: for tho his hypocriſy has preſerved to him ſome few friends, and his immenſe wealth draws after him many followers, the world in general are by no means divided in their ſentiments concerning him.

BUT whilſt you can have his picture from ſo many better hands, why are you deſirous

deſirous of ſeeing it by mine? It is a painful employment to contemplate human nature in its deformities; as there is nothing, perhaps, more difficult than to execute a portrait of the characteriſtical kind with ſtrength and ſpirit. However, ſince you have aſſigned me the taſk, I do not think myſelf at liberty to refuſe it; eſpecially as it is your intereſt to ſee him delineated in his true form.

MEZENTIUS, with the deſigns and artifice of a Catiline, affects the integrity and patriotiſm of a Cato. Liberty, juſtice, and honor, are words which he knows perfectly well how to apply with addreſs; and having them always ready upon proper occaſions, he conceals the blackeſt purpoſes under the faireſt appearances. For void, as in truth he is, of every worthy principle, he has too much policy not to pretend to the nobleſt; well knowing, that counterfeit virtues are the moſt ſucceſsful vices. It is by arts of this kind, that, notwithſtanding he has ſhewn himſelf unreſtrained by the moſt ſacred engagements of ſociety, and uninfluenced by the moſt tender affections of nature, he has ſtill been able to retain

retain ſome degree of credit in the world: for he never ſacrifices his honor to his intereſt, that he does not, in ſome leſs conſiderable, but more open inſtance, make a conceſſion of his intereſt to his honor; and thus, while he ſinks his character on one ſide, very artfully raiſes it on the other. Accordingly, under pretence of the moſt ſcrupulous delicacy of conſcience, he lately reſigned a poſt which he held under my lord Godolphin; when at the ſame time he was endeavouring, by the moſt ſhameleſs artifices and evaſions, to deceive and defraud a friend of mine in one of the moſt ſolemn and important tranſactions that can paſs between man and man.

But will you not ſuſpect that I am deſcribing a phantom of my own imagination, when I tell you after this, that he has erected himſelf into a reformer of manners, and is ſo injudiciouſly officious as to draw the enquiry of the world upon his own morals, by attempting to expoſe the defects of others. A man who ventures publickly to point out the blemiſhes of his contemporaries, ſhould at leaſt be free from any uncommon ſtain himſelf, and have nothing

remarkably

remarkable dark in the complexion of his own private character. But MEZENTIUS, not ſatisfied with being vitious, has at length determined to be ridiculous; and after having wretchedly ſquandred his youth and his patrimony in riot and diſſoluteneſs, is contemptibly miſpending his old age in meaſuring impotent ſyllables, and dealing out pointleſs abuſe. Farewel, I am, &c.

LETTER XLI.

To ORONTES.

March 10, 1738.

WHAT haughty Sachariſſa has put you out of humor with her whole ſex? for it is ſome diſappointment, I ſuſpect, of the tender kind, that has thus ſharpened the edge of your ſatire, and pointed its invective againſt the fairer half of our ſpecies. You were not miſtaken, however, when you ſuppoſed I ſhould prove no convert to your doctrine; but riſe up as an advocate, where I profeſs myſelf an admirer. I am not, 'tis true, altogether of old Montaigne's opinion, that the ſouls of both ſexes

ſont

ſont jettez (as he expreſſes it) *en meſme moules:* on the contrary, I am willing enough to join with you in thinking, that they may be wrought off from different models. Yet the *caſts* may be equally perfect, tho it ſhould be allowed that they are eſſentially different. Nature, it is certain, has traced out a ſeparate courſe of action for the two ſexes; and as they are appointed to diſtinct offices of life, it is not improbable that there may be ſomething diſtinct likewiſe in the frame of their minds; that there may be a kind of ſex in the very ſoul.

I CANNOT therefore but wonder, that Plato ſhould have thought it reaſonable to admit them into an equal ſhare of the dignities and offices of this imaginary commonwealth; and that the wiſdom of the antient Egyptians ſhould have ſo ſtrangely inverted the evident intentions of Providence, as to confine the men to domeſtic affairs, whilſt the women, it is ſaid, were engaged abroad in the active and laborious ſcenes of buſineſs. Hiſtory, it muſt be owned, will ſupply ſome few female inſtances of all the moſt maſculine virtues: but appearances of that extraordinary kind are too uncom-

mon, to ſupport the notion of a general equality in the natural powers of their minds.

THUS much, however, ſeems evident, that there are certain moral boundaries which nature has drawn between the two ſexes, and that neither of them can paſs over the limits of the other, without equally deviating from the beauty and decorum of their reſpective characters: Boadicea in armor is, to me at leaſt, as extravagant a ſight, as Achilles in petticoats.

IN determining, therefore, the comparative merit of the two ſexes, it is no derogation from female excellency, that it differs in kind from that which diſtinguiſhes the male part of our ſpecies. And if in general it ſhall be found (what, upon an impartial enquiry, I believe, will moſt certainly be found) that women fill up their appointed circle of action with greater regularity and dignity, than men; the claim of preference cannot juſtly be decided in our favor. In the prudential and œconomical parts of life, I think it undeniable that they riſe far above us. And if true fortitude of mind is beſt diſcovered by a chearful reſignation to the meaſures of Providence, we

ſhall not find reaſon, perhaps, to claim that moſt ſingular of the human virtues as our peculiar privilege. There are numbers of the other ſex, who, from the natural delicacy of their conſtitution, paſs thro one continued ſcene of ſuffering, from their cradles to their graves, with a firmneſs of reſolution that would deſerve ſo many ſtatues to be erected to their memories, if heroiſm were not eſtimated more by the ſplendor than the merit of actions.

But whatever real difference there may be between the moral or intellectual powers of the male and female mind; nature does not ſeem to have marked the diſtinction ſo ſtrongly as our vanity is willing to imagine: and after all, perhaps, education will be found to conſtitute the principal ſuperiority. It muſt be acknowledged, at leaſt, that in this article we have every advantage over the ſofter ſex, that art and induſtry can poſſibly ſecure to us. The moſt animating examples of Greece and Rome are ſet before us, as early as we are capable of any obſervation; and the nobleſt compoſitions of the antients are given into our hands, almoſt as ſoon as we have ſtrength to hold them:

them: while the employments of the other ſex, at the ſame period of life, are generally the reverſe of every thing that can open and enlarge their minds, or fill them with juſt and rational notions. The truth of it is, female education is ſo much worſe than none, as it is better to leave the mind to its natural and uninſtructed ſuggeſtions, than to lead it into falſe purſuits, and contract its views, by turning them upon the loweſt and moſt trifling objects. We ſeem, indeed, by the manner in which we ſuffer the youth of that ſex to be trained, to conſider women agreably to the opinion of certain Mahometan doctors, and treat them as if we believed they have no ſouls: why elſe are they

Bred only and completed to the taſte
Of luſtful appetence, to ſing, to dance,
To dreſs, and troule the tongue, and roll the eye? MILT.

THIS ſtrange neglect of cultivating the female mind, can hardly be allowed as good policy, when it is conſidered how much the intereſt of ſociety is concerned in the rectitude of their underſtandings. That ſeaſon

of every man's life which is moſt ſuſceptible of the ſtrongeſt impreſſions, is neceſſarily under female direction; as there are few inſtances, perhaps, in which that ſex is not one of the ſecret ſprings which regulates the moſt important movements of private or public tranſactions. What Cato obſerved of his countrymen, is in one reſpect true of every nation under the ſun: "The Romans, ſaid he, govern the "world, but it is the women that govern "the Romans." Let not, however, a certain pretended Cato of your acquaintance take occaſion from this maxim to *inſult* a ſecond time that *innocence* he has ſo often *injured:* for I will tell him another maxim as true as the former, that "there are *cir-* "*cumſtances* wherein no woman has power "enough to controle a man of ſpirit."

If it be true then (as true beyond all peradventure it is) that female influence is thus extenſive; nothing, certainly, can be of more importance, than to give it a proper tendency, by the aſſiſtance of a well-directed education. Far am I from recommending any attempts to render women learned; yet ſurely it is neceſſary they

ſhould be raiſed above ignorance. Such a general tincture of the moſt uſeful ſciences as may ſerve to free the mind from vulgar prejudices, and give it a reliſh for the rational exerciſe of its powers, might very juſtly enter into the plan of female erudition. That ſex might be taught to turn the courſe of their reflections into a proper and advantageous chanel, without any danger of rendering them too elevated for the feminine duties of life. In a word, I would have them conſidered as deſigned by Providence for uſe as well as ſhew, and trained up, not only as women, but as rational creatures. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XLII.

To PALEMON.

May 5, 1746.

WHILST you are engaged in turning over the records of paſt ages, and tracing our conſtitution from its riſe, thro all its ſeveral periods; I ſometimes amuſe myſelf with reviewing certain annals of an humbler kind, and conſidering the

various turns and revolutions that have happened in the ſentiments and affections of thoſe with whom I have been moſt connected. A hiſtory of this ſort is not, indeed, ſo ſtriking as that which exhibits kings and heroes to our view; but may it not be contemplated, Palemon, with more private advantage?

METHINKS we ſhould ſcarce be ſo imbittered againſt thoſe who differ from us in principle or practice, were we oftner to reflect how frequently we have varied from ourſelves in both thoſe articles. It was but yeſterday that Lucius, whom I once knew a very zealous advocate for the moſt controverted points of faith, was arguing with equal warmth and vehemence on the principles of Deiſm; as Bathillus, who ſet out in the world a cool infidel, has lately drawn up one of the moſt plauſible defences of the myſtic devotees, that, perhaps, was ever written. The truth is, a man muſt either have paſſed his whole life without reflecting, or his thoughts muſt have run in a very limited chanel, who has not often experienced many remarkable revolutions of mind.

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THE ſame kind of inconſtancy is obſervable in our purſuits of happineſs as well as truth. Thus our friend Curio, whom we both remember in the former part of his life, enamored of every fair face he met, and enjoying every woman he could purchaſe, has at laſt collected this diffuſive flame into a ſingle point, and could not be tempted to commit an infidelity to his marriage vow, tho a form as beautiful as the Venus of Apelles was to court his embrace: whilſt Apemanthes, on the other hand, who was the moſt ſober and domeſtic man I ever knew till he loſt his wife, commenced a rake at five and forty, and is now for ever in a tavern or a ſtew.

WHO knows, Palemon, whether even this humor of moralizing, which, as you often tell me, ſo ſtrongly marks my character, may not wear out in time, and be ſucceeded by a brighter and more lively vein? who knows but I may court again the miſtreſs I have forſaken, and die at laſt in the arms of ambition? Cleora, at leaſt, who frequently rallies me upon that fever of my youth, aſſures me I am only in the intermiſſion of a fit, which will certainly

return. But tho there may be ſome excuſe, perhaps, in exchanging our follies or our errors, there can be none in reſuming thoſe we have once happily quitted: for ſurely he muſt be a very injudicious ſportſman, who can be tempted to beat over thoſe fields again which have ever diſappointed him of his game. Farewel. I am, &c.

LETTER XLIII.

To EUPHRONIUS.

July 2, 1742.

IT is a preity obſervation, which I have ſome where met, that "the moſt "pleaſing of all harmony ariſes from the "cenſure of a ſingle perſon, when mix-"ed with the general applauſes of the "world." I almoſt ſuſpect, therefore, that you are conſidering the intereſt of your admired author, when you call upon me for my farther objections to his performance: and are for joining me perhaps, to the number of thoſe who advance his reputation, by oppoſing it. The truth, however, is, you could not have choſen a critic (if a critic I might

I might venture to call myſelf) who has a higher eſteem for all the compoſitions of Mr. Pope: as indeed I look upon every thing that comes from his hands, with the ſame degree of veneration as if it were conſecrated by antiquity. Nevertheleſs, tho I greatly revere his judgment, I cannot abſolutely renounce my own; and ſince ſome have been bold enough to advance, that even the ſacred writings themſelves do not always ſpeak the language of the Spirit; I may have leave to ſuſpect of the poets what has been aſſerted of the prophets, and ſuppoſe that their pens are not, at all ſeaſons, under the guidance of inſpiration. But as there is ſomething extremely ungrateful to the mind, in dwelling upon thoſe little ſpots that neceſſarily attend the luſtre of all human merit; you muſt allow me to join his beauties with his imperfections, and admire with rapture after having condemned with regret.

THERE is a certain modern figure of ſpeech, which the authors of *The art of ſinking in poetry* have called the *diminiſhing*. This, ſo far as it relates to words only, conſiſts in debaſing a great idea, by expreſſing

ſing it in a term of meaner import. Mr. Pope has himſelf now and then fallen into this kind of the *profound*, which he has with ſuch uncommon wit and ſpirit expoſed in the writings of others. Thus Agamemnon, addreſſing himſelf to Menelaus and Ulyſſes, aſks,

And can you, chiefs, without a bluſh ſurvey
Whole troops *before you*, lab'ring *in the* fray?
B. iv.

So likewiſe Pandarus, ſpeaking of Diomed, who is performing the utmoſt efforts of heroiſm in the field of battle, ſays,

ſome guardian of the ſkies,
Involv'd in clouds, protects him in the fray.
V. 235.

But what would you think, Euphronius, were you to hear of the "imper-"vious foam" and "rough waves of a "*brook?*" would it not put you in mind of that drole thought of the ingenious Dr. Young, in one of his epiſtles to our author, where he talks of a puddle *in a ſtorm?* yet by thus confounding the properties of the higheſt objects with thoſe of the loweſt,

Mr.

Mr. Pope has turned one of the moſt pleaſing ſimiles in the whole Iliad, into downright burleſque:

As when ſome ſimple ſwain his cot forſakes,
And wide thro fens an unknown journey takes;
If chance a ſwelling brook *his paſſage ſtay,*
And foam impervious *croſs the wand'rer's way,*
Confus'd he ſtops, a length of country paſt,
Eyes the rough waves, *and tir'd, returns at laſt.* V. 734.

This ſwelling brook, however, of Mr. Pope, is in Homer a rapid river, ruſhing with violence into the ſea:

Στηη ἐπ' ωκυροῳ ποταμῳ αλαδε ῥοοντι. V. 598.

It is one of the eſſential requiſites of an epic poem, and indeed every other kind of ſerious poetry, that the ſtyle be raiſed above common language; as nothing takes off ſo much from that ſolemnity of diction, from which the poet ought never to depart, as idioms of a vulgar and familiar caſt. Mr. Pope has ſometimes neglected this important rule; but moſt frequently in the intro-

introduction of his ſpeeches. To mention only a few inſtances:

That done, *to Phœnix Ajax gave the ſign.*
ix. 291.

With that *ſtern Ajax his long ſilence broke.*
ix. 735.

With that *the venerable warrior roſe.*
x. 150.

With that they ſtepp'd aſide, *&c.*
x. 415.

Whereas Homer generally prefaces his ſpeeches with a dignity of phraſe, that calls up the attention of the reader to what is going to be uttered. Milton has very happily copied his manner in this particular, as in many others; and tho he often falls into a flatneſs of expreſſion, he has never once, I think, committed that error upon occaſions of this kind. He uſually uſhers in his harangues with ſomething characteriſtical of the ſpeaker, or that points out ſome remarkable circumſtance of his preſent ſituation, in the following manner:

Satan, with bold words
Breaking the horrid ſilence, thus began.
i. 82.

him

him thus anſwer'd ſoon his bold compeer.
i. 125.

He ended frowning:
on the other ſide uproſe
Belial,
And with perſuaſive accents thus began.
ii. 106.

If you compare the effect which an introduction of this deſcriptive ſort has upon the mind, with thoſe low and unawakening expreſſions which I have marked in the lines I juſt now quoted from our Engliſh Iliad; you will not, perhaps, conſider my objection as altogether without foundation.

ALL oppoſition of ideas ſhould be carefully avoided in a poem of this kind, as unbecoming the gravity of the heroic Muſe. But does not Mr. Pope ſometimes ſacrifice ſimplicity to falſe ornament, and loſe the majeſty of Homer in the affectations of Ovid? Of this ſort a ſevere critic would, perhaps, eſteem his calling an army marching with ſpears erect, a *moving iron wood:*

Such and ſo thick th' embattled ſquadrons ſtood
With ſpears erect, a moving iron wood.

There

There ſeems alſo to be an inconſiſtency in the two parts of this deſcription; for the troops are repreſented as ſtanding ſtill, at the ſame time that the circumſtance mentioned of the ſpears, ſhould rather imply (as indeed the truth is) that they were in motion. But if the tranſlator had been faithful to his author in this paſſage, neither of theſe objections could have been raiſed: for in Homer it is,

Τοιαι
πυκιναι κινυντο φαλαγγες
Κυανεαι, σακεσιν τε και εγχεσι πεφρικυιαι.
iv. 280.

Is there not likewiſe ſome little tendency to a pun, in thoſe upbraiding lines which Hector addreſſes to Paris?

For thee great Ilion's guardian heroes fall
Till heaps of dead alone defend the wall.

Mr. Pope at leaſt deſerts his guide, in order to give us this conceit of dead men *defending* a town; for the original could not poſſibly lead him into it. Homer, with a plainneſs ſuitable to the occaſion, only tells us,

Λαοι

Λαοι μὲν φθινυθεσι περι πολιν, αιπυ τε τειχος,
Μαρναμενοι. vi. 327.

TEUCER, in the eighth book, aims a dart at Hector, which, miſſing its way, ſlew Gorythio; upon which we are told,

Another ſhaft the raging archer threw;
That other ſhaft with erring fury flew.
(From Hector Phœbus turn'd the flying wound)
Yet fell not dry *or* guiltleſs *to the ground.*

A *flying wound* is a thought exactly in the ſpirit of Ovid; but highly unworthy of Pope as well as of Homer: and, indeed, there is not the leaſt foundation for it in the original. But what do you think of the ſhaft that fell *dry* or *guiltleſs?* where you ſee, one figurative epithet is added as explanatory of the other. The doubling of epithets, without raiſing the idea, is not allowable in compoſitions of any kind; but leaſt of all in poetry. It is, ſays Quinctilian, as if every common ſoldier in an army were to be attended with a valet; you encreaſe your number without adding to your ſtrength.

BUT if it be a fault to crowd epithets of the ſame import one upon the other; it is

is much more ſo to employ ſuch as call off the attention from the principal idea to be raiſed, and turn it upon little or foreign circumſtances. When Æneas is wounded by Tydides, Homer deſcribes Venus as conducting him thro the thickeſt tumult of the enemy, and conveying him from the field of battle. But while we are following the hero with our whole concern, and trembling for the danger which ſurrounds him on all ſides; Mr. Pope leads us off from our anxiety for Æneas, by an unintereſting epithet relating to the ſtructure of thoſe inſtruments of death, which were every where flying about him; and we are coldly informed, that the darts were *feathered:*

Safe thro the ruſhing horſe and feather'd *flight*
Of ſounding ſhafts, ſhe bears him thro the fight.
V. 393.

But as his epithets ſometimes debaſe the general image to be raiſed; ſo they now and then adorn them with a falſe brilliancy. Thus, ſpeaking of a perſon ſlain by an arrow, he calls it a *pointed death*, iv. 607. deſcribing another who was attacked by numbers at once, he tells us,

A grove

A grove of lances glitter'd *at his breaſt.*

iv. 621.

and repreſenting a foreſt on fire, he ſays,

In blazing heaps the grove's old honors fall,
And one refulgent *ruin levels all.*

x. 201.

But one of the moſt unpardonable inſtances of this kind is, where he relates the death of Hypſenor, a perſon, who it ſeems, exerciſed the ſacerdotal office:

On his broad ſhoulder fell the forceful brand,
Thence glancing downward lopt his holy hand,
And ſtain'd with ſacred blood the bluſhing *ſand.*

To take the force of this epithet, we muſt ſuppoſe that the redneſs which appeared upon the ſand on this occaſion, was an effect of its bluſhing to find itſelf ſtained with the blood of ſo ſacred a perſon: than which there cannot be a more forced and unnatural thought. It puts me in mind of a paſſage in a French dramatic writer, who has formed a play upon the ſtory of Pyramus and Thiſbe. The hapleſs maid, addreſſing herſelf to the dagger, which lies by the ſide

of her lover, breaks out into the following exclamation:

Ah! voici le poignard qui du ſang de ſon maître
S'eſt ſouillé lachement: il en rougit *le traitre.*

Boileau, taking notice of theſe lines, obſerves, *toutes les glaces du Nord enſemble ne ſont pas, à mon ſens, plus froides que cette penſée.* But of the two poets, I know not whether Mr. Pope is not moſt to be condemned: for whatever ſhame the poignard might take to itſelf, for being concerned in the murder of the lover; it is certain that the ſand had not the leaſt ſhare in the death of the prieſt.

The antient critics have inſiſted much upon propriety of language; and, indeed, one may with great juſtice ſay what the inſulted Job does to his impertinent friends, *how forcible are right words!* The truth is, tho the ſentiment muſt always ſupport the expreſſion, yet the expreſſion muſt give grace and efficacy to the ſentiment; and the ſame thought ſhall frequently be admired or condemned, according to the merit of the particular phraſe in which it is conveyed. For this reaſon, J. Cæſar,

Cæſar, in a treatiſe which he wrote concerning the Latin language, calls a judicious choice of words, *the origine of eloquence*; as indeed neither oratory nor poetry can be raiſed to any degree of perfection, where this their principal root is neglected. In this art Virgil particularly excels; and it is the inimitable grace of his words (as Mr. Dryden ſomewhere juſtly obſerves) wherein that beauty principally conſiſts, which gives ſo inexpreſſible a pleaſure to him, who beſt underſtands their force. No man was ever a more ſkilful maſter of this powerful art, than Mr. Pope; as he has, upon ſeveral occaſions throughout this tranſlation, raiſed and dignified his ſtyle with certain antiquated words and phraſes, that are moſt wonderfully ſolemn and majeſtic. I cannot, however, forbear mentioning an inſtance, where he has employed an obſolete term leſs happily, I think, than is his general cuſtom. It occurs in ſome lines which I juſt now quoted for another purpoſe:

On his broad ſhoulder fell the forceful brand,
Thence glancing downward lopt his holy hand.
V, 105.

Brand is ſometimes uſed by Spencer for a ſword; and in that ſenſe it is here introduced. But as we ſtill retain this word in a different application, it will always be improper to adapt it in its antiquated meaning, becauſe it muſt neceſſarily occaſion ambiguity: an error in ſtyle of all others the moſt to be avoided. Accordingly, every reader of the lines I have quoted, muſt take up an idea very different from that which the poet intends, and which he will carry on with him, till he arrives at the middle of the ſecond verſe. And if he happens to be unacquainted with the language of our old writers, when he comes to

lopt *his ſacred hand*,

he will be loſt in a confuſion of images, and have abſolutely no idea remaining.

THERE is another uncommon elegance in the management of words, which requires a very ſingular turn of genius, and great delicacy of judgment to attain. As the art I juſt before mentioned, turns upon employing antiquated words with force and propriety; ſo this conſiſts in giving the grace of novelty to the received and current terms

terms of a language, by applying them in a new and unexpected manner:

Dixeris egregiè, notum ſi callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum. HOR.

The great caution, however, to be obſerved in any attempt of this kind, is ſo judiciouſly to connect the expreſſions, as to remove every doubt concerning the ſignification in which they are deſigned: for as perſpicuity is the end and ſupreme excellency of writing, there cannot be a more fatal objection to an author's ſtyle, than that it ſtands in need of a commentator. But will not this objection lie againſt the following verſe?

Next artful *Phereclus untimely fell.* V, 75.

The word *artful* is here taken out of its appropriated acceptation, in order to expreſs

ος χερσιν επιϛατο δαιδαλα πασνα
Τεχειν.

But however allowable it may be (as indeed it is not only allowable, but graceful) to raiſe a word above its ordinary import, when the *callida junctura* (as Horace calls it) determines at once the ſenſe in which

it is uſed: yet it ſhould never be caſt ſo far back from its cuſtomary meaning, as to ſtand for an idea which has no relation to what it implies, in its primary and natural ſtate. This would be introducing uncertainty and confuſion into a language; and turning every ſentence into a riddle. Accordingly, after we have travelled on thro the ſeveral ſucceeding lines in this paſſage, we are obliged to change the idea with which we ſet out; and find, at laſt, that by the *artful* Phereclus we are to underſtand, not what we at firſt apprehend, a man of cunning and deſign; but one who is ſkilled in the mechanical arts.

It is with a liberty of the ſame unſucceſsful kind, that Mr. Pope has rendered

Τον πρότερος προσέειπε Λυκαονος αγλαος υος'
V, 276.

Stern Lycaon's warlike race begun.

I know not by what figure of ſpeech the whole race of a man can denote his next immediate deſcendant: and, I fear, no ſynecdoche can acquit this expreſſion of nonſenſe. The truth is, whoever ventures to ſtrike out of the common road, muſt be more

more than ordinarily careful, or he will probably loſe his way.

THIS reminds me of a paſſage or two, where our poet has been extremely injurious to the ſenſe of his author, and made him talk a language which he never uſes; the language, I mean, of abſurdity. In the ſixth Iliad, Agamemnon aſſures Menelaus,

παντες
Ιλιθ εξαπολοιατ', ακηδεσοι. vi. 60.

But in Mr. Pope's verſion, that chief tells his brother,

Ilion ſhall periſh whole and bury *all.*

Perhaps it may be over-nice to remark, that as the deſtruction of Troy is firſt mentioned, it has a little the appearance of nonſenſe to talk afterwards of her burying her ſons. However the latter part of this verſe directly contradicts the original: for Agamemnon is ſo far from aſſerting that Ilion ſhould bury all her inhabitants, that he pronounces poſitively, they ſhould not be buried at all: a calamity, in the opinion of the antients, of all others the moſt terrible. But poſſibly the error may lie

in the printer, not in the poet; and perhaps the line originally ſtood thus:

Ilion ſhall periſh whole, unbury'd, *all.*

If ſo, both my objections vaniſh: and thoſe who are converſant with the preſs, will not think this ſuppoſition improbable; ſince much more unlikely miſtakes often happen by the careleſſneſs of compoſitors.

But tho I am willing to make all the allowance poſſible to an author, who raiſes our admiration too often not to have a right to the utmoſt candor, wherever he fails; yet I can find no excuſe for an unaccountable abſurdity he has fallen into, in tranſlating a paſſage of the tenth book. Diomed and Ulyſſes, taking advantage of the night, ſet out in order to view the Trojan camp. In their way they meet with Dolon, who is going from thence to the Grecian, upon an errand of the ſame kind. After having ſeized this unfortunate adventurer, and examined him concerning the ſituation and deſigns of the enemy; Diomed draws his ſword, and ſtrikes off Dolon's head, in the very inſtant that he is ſupplicating for mercy:

Φθεγξομένω δ' ἄρα τε γε καρη κονιῃσιν εμιχθη.

X. 457.

Mr. Pope has turned this into a moſt extraordinary miracle, by aſſuring us that the head ſpoke after it had quitted the body:

The head yet ſpeaking, mutter'd as it fell.

This puts me in mind of a wonder of the ſame kind in the *Fairy Queen*, where Corflambo is repreſented as blaſpheming, after his head had been ſtruck off by prince Arthur:

He ſmote at him with all his might and main
So furiouſly, that, ere he wiſt, he found
His head before him tumbling on the ground,
The whiles his babbling tongue did yet blaſpheme,
And curs'd his God, that did him ſo confound. Book iv. 8.

But Corflambo was the ſon of a gianteſs, and could conquer whole kingdoms by only looking at them. We may, perhaps, therefore allow him to talk, when every other man muſt be ſilent: whereas there is nothing in the hiſtory of poor Dolon, that can give him the leaſt pretence to this ſingular privilege. The truth is, Mr. Pope ſeems to have been led into this blunder by Scaliger,

Scaliger, who has given the ſame ſenſe to the verſe, and then with great wiſdom and gravity obſerves, *falſum eſt a pulmone caput avulſum loqui poſſe.*

THE moſt pleaſing picture in the whole Iliad, is, I think, the parting of Hector and Andromache: and our excellent tranſlator has, in general, very ſucceſsfully copied it. But in ſome places he ſeems not to have touched it with that delicacy of pencil, which graces the original; as he has entirely loſt the beauty of one of the figures. Hector is repreſented as extending his arms to embrace the little Aſtyanax, who being terrified with the unuſual appearance of a man in armor, throws himſelf back upon his nurſe's breaſt, and falls into tears. But tho the hero and his ſon were deſigned to draw our principal attention, Homer intended likewiſe that we ſhould caſt a glance towards the nurſe. Accordingly, he does not mark her out merely by the name of her office; but adds an epithet to ſhew that ſhe makes no inconſiderable figure in the piece: he does not ſimply call her τιθηνη, but εϋζωνος τιθηνη. This circumſtance Mr. Pope has entirely everlooked:

Ως

Ως ειπων, ϗ παιδος ορεξατ' Φαιδιμος Εκτωρ.
Αψ δ' ο παϊς προς κολπον ευζωνοιο τιθηνης
Εκλινθη ιαχων, πατρος φιλα οψιν ατυχθεις,
Ταρβησας χαλκον τε, ιδε λοφον ιπποχαιτην,
Δεινον απ' ακροτατης κορυθος νεννοτα νεισας·
Εκ δ' εγελασσε πατηρ τε φιλος, ϗαι ποτνια μητηρ.
Αυτικ' απο κρατος κορυθ' ειλετο Φαιδιμος Εκτωρ,
Ϗαι την μεν κατεθηκεν επι χθονι παμφανοωσαν.

vi. 466.

Thus having ſaid, th' illuſtrious chief of Troy
Stretch'd his fond arms to claſp the lovely boy;
The babe clung crying to his nurſe's *breaſt,*
Scar'd by the dazzling helm and nodding creſt:
With ſecret pleaſure each fond parent ſmil'd,
And Hector haſted to relieve his child:
The glit'tring terrors *from his head unbound,*
And plac'd the beaming helmet on the ground.

I was going to object to the *glittering terrors*, in the laſt line but one: but I have already taken notice of theſe little affected expreſſions, where the ſubſtantive is ſet at variance with its attribute.

It is the obſervation of Quinctilian, that no poet ever excelled Homer in the ſublimity with which he treats great ſubjects, or in the delicacy and propriety he always diſcovers

diſcovers in the management of ſmall ones. There is a paſſage in the ninth Iliad, which will juſtify the truth of the latter of theſe obſervations. When Achilles receives Ajax and Ulyſſes in his tent, who were ſent to him in the name of Agamemnon, in order to prevail with him to return to the army; Homer gives a very minute account of the entertainment, which was prepared for them upon that occaſion. It is impoſſible, perhaps, in modern language to preſerve the ſame dignity in deſcriptions of this kind, which ſo conſiderably raiſes the original: and indeed Mr. Pope warns his readers not to expect much beauty in the picture. However, a tranſlator ſhould be careful not to throw in any additional circumſtances, which may lower and debaſe the piece; which yet Mr. Pope has, in his verſion of the following line:

Πυρ δε Μενοιτιαδης δαιεν μεγα, ισοθεος φως.
IX. 211.

Mean while Patroclus ſweats, *the fire to raiſe.*

Own the truth, Euphronius: does not this give you the idea of a greaſy cook at a kitchen fire? whereas nothing of this kind is ſuggeſted in the original. On the contra-

ry,

ry, the epithet ισοθεος ſeems to have been added by Homer, in order to reconcile us to the meanneſs of the action, by reminding us of the high character of the perſon who is engaged in it; and, as Mr. Addiſon obſerves of Virgil's huſbandmen, that "he "toſſes about his dung with an air of grace-"fulneſs;" one may, with the ſame truth, ſay of Homer's hero, that he lights his fire with an air of dignity.

I INTENDED to have cloſed theſe haſty objections, with laying before you ſome of thoſe paſſages, where Mr. Pope ſeems to have equalled, or excelled his original. But I perceive I have already extended my letter beyond a reaſonable limit: I will reſerve therefore that more pleaſing, as well as much eaſier taſk, to ſome future occaſion. In the mean time, I deſire you will look upon thoſe remarks, not as proceeding from a ſpirit of cavil (than which I know not any more truly contemptible) but as an inſtance of my having read your favorite poet with that attention, which his own unequalled merit and your judicious recommendation moſt deſervedly claim. I am, &c.

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LETTER XLIV.

To PALAMEDES.

April 18, 1739.

I HAVE had occaſion a thouſand times ſince I ſaw you, to wiſh myſelf *in the land where all things are forgotten*; at leaſt, that I did not live in the memory of certain reſtleſs mortals of your acquaintance, who are viſitors by profeſſion. The misfortune is, no retirement is ſo remote, nor ſanctuary ſo ſacred, as to afford a protection from their impertinence; and tho one were to fly to the deſart, and take refuge in the cells of ſaints and hermits, one ſhould be alarmed with their unmeaning *voice*, *crying* even *in the wilderneſs*. They ſpread themſelves, in truth, over the whole face of the land, and lay waſte the faireſt hours of converſation. For my own part (to ſpeak of them in a ſtyle ſuitable to their taſte and talents) I look upon them, not as paying viſits, but *viſitations*; and am never obliged to give audience to one of this ſpecies, that I do not conſider myſelf as under a judgment for thoſe numberleſs hours, which I have

have ſpent in vain. If theſe ſons and daughters of idleneſs and folly would be perſuaded to enter into an excluſive ſociety among themſelves, the reſt of the world might poſſeſs their moments unmoleſted: but nothing leſs will ſatisfy them than opening a general commerce, and ſailing into every port where choice or chance may drive them. Were we to live, indeed, to the years of the antediluvians, one might afford to reſign ſome part of one's own time, in charitable relief of the unſufferable weight of theirs; but ſince the days of man are ſhrunk into a few haſty revolutions of the ſun, whole afternoons are much too conſiderable a ſacrifice to be offered up to tame civility. What heightens the contempt of this character, is, that they who have ſo much of the form, have always leaſt of the power of friendſhip: and tho they will *craze their chariot wheels* (as Milton expreſſes it) to deſtroy your repoſe; they would not drive half the length of a ſtreet to aſſiſt your diſtreſs.

It was owing to an interruption from one of theſe obſequious intruders, that I was prevented keeping my engagement with

with you yeſterday; and you muſt indulge me in this diſcharge of my invective againſt the ridiculous occaſion of ſo mortifying a diſappointment. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XLV.

To HORTENSIUS.

May 8, 1747.

To be able to ſuppreſs my acknowledgments of the pleaſure I received from your approbation, were to ſhew that I do not deſerve it; for is it poſſible to value the praiſe of the judicious as one ought, and yet be ſilent under its influence? I can with ſtrict truth ſay of you, what a Greek poet did of Plato, who, reading his performance to a circle where that great philoſopher was preſent, and finding himſelf deſerted at length by all the reſt of the company, cried out, "I will proceed "nevertheleſs, for Plato is himſelf an au-"dience."

TRUE fame, indeed, is no more in the gift than in the poſſeſſion of numbers, as it is only in the diſpoſal of the wiſe and the impartial

impartial. But if both thoſe qualifications muſt concur to give validity to a vote of this kind, how little reaſon has an author to be either depreſſed or elated by general cenſure or applauſe?

THE triumphs of genius are not like thoſe of antient heroiſm, where the meaneſt captive made a part of the pomp, as well as the nobleſt. It is not the multitude, but the dignity of thoſe that compoſe her followers, that can add any thing to her real glory; and a ſingle attendant may often render her more truly illuſtrious, than a whole train of common admirers. I am ſure at leaſt, I have no ambition of drawing after me vulgar acclamations; and whilſt I have the happineſs to enjoy your applauſe, I ſhall always conſider myſelf in poſſeſſion of the trueſt fame. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER XLVI.

To CLYTANDER.

Sept. 10, 1738.

YOU who never forget any thing, can tell me, I dare ſay, whoſe obſervation it is, that "of all the actions of our

" life nothing is more uncommon, than to " laugh or cry with a good grace." But tho I cannot recollect the author, I ſhall always retain his maxim; as, indeed, every day's occurrences ſuggeſt the truth of it to my mind. I had particularly an occaſion to ſee one part of it verified in the treatiſe I herewith return you: for never, ſurely, was mirth more injudiciouſly directed, than that which this writer of your acquaintance has employed. To drole upon the eſtabliſhed religion of a country, and laugh at the moſt ſacred and inviolable of her ordinances, is as far removed from good politics, as it is from good manners. It is indeed upon maxims of policy alone, that one can reaſon with thoſe who purſue the principles, which this author has embraced: I will add therefore (ſince, it ſeems, you ſometimes communicate to him my letters) that to endeavour to leſſen that veneration which is due to the religious inſtitutions of a nation, when they neither run counter to any of the great lines of morality; nor oppoſe the natural rights of mankind, is a ſort of zeal which I know not by what epithet ſufficiently to ſtigmatize: it is attacking

tacking the ſtrongeſt hold of ſociety, and attempting to deſtroy the firmeſt guard of human ſecurity. Far am I, indeed, from thinking there is no other; or that the notion of a moral ſenſe is a vain and groundleſs hypotheſis. But wonderfully limited muſt the experience of thoſe philoſophers undoubtedly be, who imagine, that an implanted love of virtue is ſufficient to conduct the generality of mankind thro the paths of moral duties, and ſuperſede the neceſſity of a farther and more powerful guide. A ſenſe of honor, likewiſe, where it operates in its true and genuine vigor, is, I confeſs, a moſt noble and powerful principle; but far too refined a motive of action, even for the more cultivated part of our ſpecies to adopt in general: and, in fact, we find it much oftner profeſſed, than purſued. Nor are the laws of a community ſufficient to anſwer all the reſtraining purpoſes of government; as there are many moral points, which it is impoſſible to ſecure by expreſs proviſions. Human inſtitutions can reach no farther than to certain general duties, in which the collective welfare of ſociety is more particularly concern-

ed. Whatever elſe is neceſſary for the eaſe and happineſs of ſocial intercourſe, can be derived only from the aſſiſtance of religion; which influences the nicer connections and dependencies of mankind, as it regulates and corrects the heart. How many tyrannies may I exerciſe as a parent, how many hardſhips may I inflict as a maſter, if I take the ſtatutes of my country for the only guides of my actions, and think every thing lawful, that is not immediately penal? The truth is, a man may be injured in a variety of inſtances far more atrociouſly, than by what the law conſiders either as a fraud or a robbery. Now in caſes of this kind (and many very important caſes of this kind there are) to remove the bars of religion, is to throw open the gates of oppreſſion: it is to leave the honeſt expoſed to the injurious inroads of thoſe (and they are far, perhaps, the greateſt part of mankind) who, tho they would never *do juſtice and love mercy*, in compliance with the dictates of nature; would ſcrupulouſly practice both in obedience to the rules of revelation.

THE groſs of our ſpecies can never, indeed, be influenced by abſtract reaſoning, nor captivated by the naked charms of virtue: on the contrary, nothing ſeems more evident than that the generality of mankind muſt be engaged by ſenſible objects; muſt be wrought upon by their hopes and fears. And this has been the conſtant maxim of all the celebrated legiſlators, from the earlieſt eſtabliſhment of government, to this preſent hour. It is true, indeed, that none have contended more warmly than the antients for the dignity of human nature, and the native diſpoſition of the ſoul to be enamored with the beauty of virtue: but it is equally true, that none have more ſtrenuouſly inculcated the expediency of adding the authority of religion to the ſuggeſtions of nature, and maintaining a reverence to the appointed ceremonies of public worſhip. The ſentiments of Pythagoras (or whoever he be who was author of thoſe verſes which paſs under that philoſopher's name) are well known upon this ſubject:

Αθανατους μεν πρωτα θεους, νομῳ ως διακειται,
Τιμα.

MANY indeed are the antient paſſages which might be produced in ſupport of this aſſertion, if it were neceſſary to produce any paſſages of this kind to you, whom I have ſo often heard contend for the ſame truth with all the awakening powers of learning and eloquence. Suffer me, however, for the benefit of your acquaintance, to remind you of one or two, which I do not remember ever to have ſeen quoted.

LIVY has recorded a ſpeech of Appius Claudius Craſſus, which he made in oppoſition to certain demands of the tribunes. That zealous ſenator warmly argues againſt admitting the plebeians into a ſhare of the conſular dignity; from the power of taking the auſpices being originally and ſolely veſted in the patrician order. "But perhaps (ſays Craſſus) I ſhall be told, that "the pecking of a chicken, &c. are trifles "unworthy of regard: trifling, however, "as theſe ceremonies may now be deemed, "it was by the ſtrict obſervance of them, "that our anceſtors raiſed this commonwealth to its preſent point of grandeur." *Parva ſunt hæc: ſed parva iſta non contemnendo, majores noſtri maximam hanc rem fecerunt.*

fecerunt. Agreably to this principle, the Roman hiſtorian of the life of Alexander, deſcribes that monarch, after having killed his friend Clitus, as conſidering, in his cool moments, whether the gods had not permitted him to be guilty of that horrid act, in puniſhment for his irreligious neglect of their ſacred rites. And Juvenal [a] imputes the ſource of that torrent of vice which broke in upon the age in which he wrote, to the general diſbelief that prevailed of the public doctrines of their eſtabliſhed religion. Thoſe tenets, he tells us, that influenced the glorious conduct of the Curii, the Scipios, the Fabricii, and the Camilli, were, in his days, ſo totally exploded, as ſcarce to be received even by children. It were well for ſome parts of the Chriſtian world, if the ſame obſervation might not with juſtice be extended beyond the limits of antient Rome: and I often reflect upon the very judicious remark of a great writer of the laſt century, who takes notice, that "the generality of Chriſtendom is now "well-nigh arrived at that fatal condition, "which immediately preceded the de-

[a] Sat. II. 149.

" ſtruction of the worſhip of the antient " world; when the face of religion in " their publick aſſemblies, was quite differ- " ent from that apprehenſion which men " had concerning it in private."

NOTHING, moſt certainly, could leſs plead the ſanction of reaſon, than the general rites of pagan worſhip. Weak and abſurd, however, as they were in themſelves, and indeed in the eſtimation too of all the wiſer ſort; yet the more thinking and judicious part, both of their ſtateſmen and philoſophers, unanimouſly concurred in ſupporting them as ſacred and inviolable: well perſuaded, no doubt, that religion is the ſtrongeſt cement in the great ſtructure of moral government. Farewel. I am, &c.

LETTER XLVII.

To CLEORA.

Sept. 1.

I LOOK upon every day wherein I have not ſome communication with my Cleora as a day loſt; and I take up my pen every afternoon to write to you, as regularly

regularly as I drink my tea, or perform any the like important article of my life.

I FREQUENTLY bleſs the happy art that affords me a means of conveying myſelf to you at this diſtance, and, by an eaſy kind of magic, thus tranſports me to your parlor at a time when I could not gain admittance by any other method. Of all people in the world, indeed, none are more obliged to this paper commerce, than friends and lovers. It is by this they elude, in ſome degree, the malevolence of fate, and can enjoy an intercourſe with each other, tho the Alps themſelves ſhall riſe up between them. Even this imaginary participation of your ſociety is far more pleaſing to me, than the real enjoyment of any other converſation the whole world could ſupply. The truth is, I have loſt all reliſh for any but yours; and if I were invited to an aſſembly of all the wits of the Auguſtan age, or all the heroes that Plutarch has celebrated, I ſhould neither have ſpirits nor curioſity to be of the party. Yet with all this indolence or indifference about me, I would take a voyage as far as the pole to ſup with Cleora on a lettuce, or only to hold the bowl while

while ſhe mixed the ſyllabub. Such happy evenings I once knew: ah Cleora! will they never return? Adieu.

LETTER XLVIII.

To EUPHRONIUS.

I HAVE read the performance you communicated to me, with all the attention you required; and I can with ſtrict ſincerity apply to your friend's verſes, what an antient has obſerved of the ſame number of Spartans who defended the paſſage of Thermopylæ; *nunquam vidi plures trecentos!* Never, indeed, was there greater energy of language and ſentiment united together in the ſame compaſs of lines: and it would be an injuſtice to the world, as well as to himſelf, to ſuppreſs ſo animated and ſo uſeful a compoſition.

A SATIRIST of true genius, who is warmed by a generous indignation of vice, and whoſe cenſures are conducted by candor and truth, merits the applauſe of every friend to virtue. He may be conſidered as a ſort of ſupplement to the legiſlative

lative authority of his country; as aſſiſting the unavoidable defects of all legal inſtitutions for regulating of manners, and ſtriking terror even where the divine prohibitions themſelves are held in contempt. The ſtrongeſt defence, perhaps, againſt the inroads of vice, among the more cultivated part of our ſpecies, is well-directed ridicule: they who fear nothing elſe, dread to be marked out to the contempt and indignation of the world. There is no ſucceeding in the ſecret purpoſes of diſhoneſty, without preſerving ſome ſort of credit among mankind; at there cannot exiſt a more impotent creature than a knave convict. To expoſe, therefore, the falſe pretenſions of counterfeit virtue, is to diſarm it at once of all power of miſchief, and to perform a public ſervice of the moſt advantageous kind, in which any man can employ his time and his talents. The voice, indeed, of an honeſt ſatiriſt is not only beneficial to the world, as giving alarm againſt the deſigns of an enemy ſo dangerous to all ſocial intercourſe; but as proving likewiſe the moſt efficacious preventive to others, of aſſuming the ſame character of

diſtinguiſhed

diſtinguiſhed infamy. Few are ſo totally vitiated, as to have abandoned all ſentiments of ſhame; and when every other principle of integrity is ſurrendered, we generally find the conflict is ſtill maintained in this laſt poſt of retreating virtue. In this view, therefore, it ſhould ſeem, the function of a ſatiriſt may be juſtified, notwithſtanding it ſhould be true (what an excellent moraliſt has aſſerted) that his chaſtiſements rather exaſperate, than reclaim thoſe on whom they fall. Perhaps, no human penalties are of any moral advantage to the criminal himſelf; and the principal benefit that ſeems to be derived from civil puniſhments of any kind, is their reſtraining influence upon the conduct of others.

It is not every arm, however, that is qualified to manage this formidable blow. The arrows of ſatire, when they are not pointed by virtue, as well as wit, recoil back upon the hand that directs them, and wound none but him from whom they proceed. Accordingly, Horace reſts the whole ſucceſs of writings of this ſort upon the poet's being *Integer Ipſe*; free himſelf from thoſe immoral ſtains which he points out

out in others. There cannot, indeed, be a more odious, nor at the ſame time a more contemptible character, than that of a vitious ſatiriſt:

Quis cælum terris non miſceat & mare cælo,
Si fur diſpliceat Verri, homicida Miloni?
JUV.

The moſt favorable light in which a cenſor of this ſpecies could poſſibly be viewed, would be that of a public executioner, who inflicts the puniſhment on others, which he has already merited himſelf. But the truth of it is, he is not qualified even for ſo wretched an office; and there is nothing to be dreaded from a ſatiriſt of known diſhoneſty, but his applauſe. Adieu.

LETTER XLIX.

To PALAMEDES.

Auguſt 2, 1734.

CEREMONY is never more unwelcome, than at that ſeaſon in which you will probably have the greateſt ſhare of it; and as I ſhould be extremely unwilling to add to the number of thoſe, who, in pure good-manners,

manners, may interrupt your enjoyments, I chuſe to give you my congratulations a little prematurely. After the happy office ſhall be completed, your moments will be too valuable to be laid out in forms; and it would be paying a compliment with a very ill grace, to draw off your eyes from the higheſt beauty, tho it were to turn them on the moſt exquiſite wit. I hope, however, you will give me timely notice of your wedding day, that I may be prepared with my epithalamium. I have already laid in half a dozen deities extremely proper for the occaſion, and have even made ſome progreſs in my firſt ſimile. But I am ſomewhat at a loſs how to proceed, not being able to determine whether your future bride is moſt like Venus or Hebe. That ſhe reſembles both, is univerſally agreed, I find, by thoſe who have ſeen her. But it would be offending, you know, againſt all the rules of poetical juſtice, if I ſhould only ſay ſhe is as handſome as ſhe is young, when after all, perhaps, the truth may be, that ſhe has even more beauty than youth. In the mean while, I am turning over all the tender compliments that love has inſpired,

ſpired, from the Leſbia of Catullus to the Chloe of Prior, and hope to gather ſuch a collection of flowers as may not be unworthy of entering into a garland compoſed for your Stella. But before you introduce me as a poet, let me be recommended to her by a much better title, and aſſure her, that I am your, &c.

LETTER. L.

To EUPHRONIUS.

I AM much inclined to join with you in thinking, that the Romans had no peculiar word in their language, which anſwers preciſely to what we call *good-ſenſe* in ours. For tho *prudentia* indeed ſeems frequently uſed by their beſt writers to expreſs that idea, yet it is not confined to that ſingle meaning, but is often applied by them to ſignify ſkill in any particular ſcience. But good-ſenſe is ſomething very diſtinct from knowledge; and it is an inſtance of the poverty of the Latin language, that ſhe is obliged to uſe the ſame word as a mark for two ſuch different ideas.

WERE

WERE I to explain what I underſtand by good-ſenſe, I ſhould call it right reaſon; but right reaſon that ariſes, not from formal and logical deductions, but from a ſort of intuitive faculty in the ſoul, which diſtinguiſhes by immediate perception: a kind of innate ſagacity, that in many of its properties ſeems very much to reſemble inſtinct. It would be improper, therefore, to ſay, that Sir Iſaac Newton ſhewed his good-ſenſe, by thoſe amazing diſcoveries which he made in natural philoſophy: the operations of this gift of heaven are rather inſtantaneous, than the reſult of any tedious proceſs. Like Diomed, after Minerva had endowed him with the power of diſcerning gods from mortals, the man of good-ſenſe diſcovers *at once* the truth of thoſe objects he is moſt concerned to diſtinguiſh; and conducts himſelf with ſuitable caution and ſecurity.

IT it for this reaſon, poſſibly, that this quality of the mind is not ſo often found united with learning as one could wiſh: for good-ſenſe being accuſtomed to receive her diſcoveries without labor or ſtudy, ſhe cannot ſo eaſily wait for thoſe truths, which being

being placed at a diſtance, and lying concealed under numberleſs covers, require much pains and application to unfold.

BUT tho good-ſenſe is not in the number, nor always, it muſt be owned, in the company of the ſciences; yet is it (as the moſt ſenſible of poets has juſtly obſerved)

fairly worth the ſeven.

Rectitude of underſtanding is indeed the moſt uſeful, as well as the moſt noble of human endowments, as it is the ſovereign guide and director in every branch of civil and ſocial intercourſe.

UPON whatever occaſion this enlightening faculty is exerted, it is always ſure to act with diſtinguiſhed eminence; but its chief and peculiar province ſeems to lie in the commerce of the world. Accordingly we may obſerve, that thoſe who have converſed more with men than with books, whoſe wiſdom is derived rather from experience than contemplation, generally poſſeſs this happy talent with ſuperier perfection: for good ſenſe, tho it cannot be acquired, may be improved; and the world, I believe, will ever be found to afford the moſt kindly ſoil for its cultivation.

I KNOW not whether true good-ſenſe is not a more uncommon quality even than true wit; as there is nothing, perhaps, more extraordinary than to meet with a perſon, whoſe entire conduct and notions are under the direction of this ſupreme guide. The ſingle inſtance at leaſt, which I could produce of its acting ſteddily and invariably throughout the whole of a character, is that which Euphronius, I am ſure, would not allow me to mention: at the ſame time, perhaps, I am rendering my own pretenſions of this kind extremely queſtionable, when I thus venture to throw before you my a ſentiments upon a ſubject, of which you are univerſally acknowledged ſo perfect a maſter. I am, &c.

LETTER LI.

To PALEMON.

May 29, 1743.

I ESTEEM your letters in the number of my moſt valuable poſſeſſions, and preſerve them as ſo many prophetical *leaves* upon which the fate of our diſtracted nation

is

is inſcribed. But in exchange for the maxims of a patriot, I can only ſend you the reveries of a recluſe, and give you *the ſtones of the brook* for *the gold of Ophir*. Never, indeed, Palemon, was there a commerce more unequal, than that wherein you are contented to engage with me; and I could ſcarce anſwer it to my conſcience to continue a traffic, where the whole benefit accrues ſingly to myſelf; did I not know, that to confer without the poſſibility of an advantage, is the moſt pleaſing exerciſe of generoſity. I will venture then to make uſe of a privilege which I have long enjoyed; as I well know you love to mix the meditations of the philoſopher with the reflections of the ſtateſman, and can turn with equal reliſh from the politics of Tacitus, to the morals of Seneca.

I WAS in my garden this morning ſomewhat earlier than uſual, when the ſun, as Milton deſcribes him,

With wheels yet hov'ring o'er the ocean brim
Shot parallel to th' earth his dewy ray.

There is ſomething in the opening of the dawn at this ſeaſon of the year, that en-

livens the mind with a ſort of chearful ſerioufneſs, and fills it with a certain calm rapture in the conſciouſneſs of its exiſtence. For my own part at leaſt, the riſing of the ſun has the ſame effect on me, as it is ſaid to have had on the celebrated ſtatue of Memnon: and I never obſerve that glorious luminary breaking out upon me, that I do not find myſelf harmonized for the whole day.

WHILST I was enjoying the freſhneſs and tranquillity of this early ſeaſon, and conſidering the many reaſons I had to join in offering up that *morning incenſe*, which the poet I juſt now mentioned, repreſents as particularly ariſing at this hour *from the earth's great altar*; I could not but eſteem it as a principal bleſſing, that I was entering upon a new day with health and ſpirits. To awake with recruited vigor for the tranſactions of life, is a mercy ſo generally diſpenſed, that it paſſes, like other the ordinary bounties of Providence, without making its due impreſſion. Yet were one never to riſe under theſe happy circumſtances, without reflecting what numbers there are, who (to uſe the language of the moſt pathetic

thetic of authors) when they ſaid, *My bed ſhall comfort me, my couch ſhall eaſe my complaint*, were, like him, *full of toſſings to and fro, unto the dawning of the day*, or *ſcared with dreams, and terrified thro viſions* — were one to conſider, I ſay, how many paſs their nights in all the horrors of a diſturbed imagination, or all the wakefulneſs of real pains, one could not find one's ſelf exempt from ſuch uneaſy ſlumbers or ſuch terrible vigils, without double ſatisfaction and gratitude. There is nothing, indeed, contributes more to render a man contented with that draught of life which is poured out to himſelf, than thus to reflect on thoſe more bitter ingredients which are ſometimes mingled in the cup of others.

In purſuing the ſame vein of thought I could not but congratulate myſelf, that I had no part in that turbulent drama which was going to be re-acted upon the great ſtage of the world; and rejoiced that it was my fortune to ſtand a diſtant and unengaged ſpectator of thoſe ſeveral characters that would ſhortly fill the ſcene. This ſuggeſted to my remembrance a paſſage in the Roman tragic poet, where he de-

ſcribes the various purſuits of the buſy and ambitious world, in very juſt and lively colors:

Ille ſuperbos aditus regum
Duraſque fores, expers ſomni,
Colit: Hic nullo fine beatus
Componit opes, gazis inhians,
Et congeſto pauper in auro eſt.
Illum populi favor attonitum,
Fluctuque magis mobile vulgus,
Aura tumidum tollit inani.
Hic clamoſi rabioſa fori
Jurgia vendens improbus, iras
Et verba locat.

and I could not forbear ſaying to myſelf, in the language of the ſame author,

me mea tellus
Lare ſecreto tutoque tegat!

Yet this circumſtance, which your friend conſiders as ſo valuable a privilege, has been eſteemed by others as the moſt ſevere of afflictions. The celebrated count de Buſſy Rabutin has written a little treatiſe, wherein, after having ſhewn that the greateſt men upon the ſtage of the world are generally

nerally the moſt unhappy, he cloſes the account by producing himſelf as an inſtance of the truth of what he had been advancing. But can you gueſs, Palemon, what this terrible diſaſter was, which thus entitled him to a rank in the number of theſe unfortunate heroes? He had compoſed, it ſeems, certain ſatirical pieces which gave offence to Louis the XIVth; for which reaſon that monarch baniſhed him from the ſlavery and dependance of a court, to live in eaſe and freedom at his country houſe. But the world had taken too ſtrong poſſeſſion of his heart, to ſuffer him to leave even the worſt part of it without reluctance; and, like the patriarch's wife, he looked back with regret upon the ſcene from which he was kindly driven, tho there was nothing in the proſpect but flames. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER LII.

To EUPHRONIUS.

Aug 20, 1742.

SURELY, Euphronius, the ſpirit of criticiſm has ſtrangely poſſeſſed you. How elſe could you be willing to ſtep aſide ſo often from the amuſements of the gayeſt ſcenes, in order to examine with me certain beauties, far other than thoſe which at preſent, it might be imagined, would wholly engage your attention? Who, indeed, that ſees my friend over-night ſupporting the vivacity of the moſt ſprightly aſſemblies, would expect to find him the next morning gravely poring over antiquated Greek, and weighing the merits of antient and modern geniuſes? But I have long admired you as an elegant *ſpectator formarum*, in every ſenſe of the expreſſion; and you can turn, I know, from the charms of beauty to thoſe of wit, with the ſame refinement of taſte and rapture. I may venture therefore to reſume our critical correſpondence without the form of an apology; as it is the ſingular character of Euphronius,

nius, to reconcile the philoſopher with the man of the world, and judiciouſly divide his hours between action and retirement.

WHAT has been ſaid of a celebrated French tranſlator, may with equal juſtice be applied to Mr. Pope, "that it is doubt-"ful whether the dead or the living are "moſt obliged to him." His tranſlations of Homer, and imitations of Horace, have introduced to the acquaintance of the Engliſh reader, two of the moſt conſiderable authors in all antiquity; as indeed they are equal to the credit of ſo many original works. A man muſt have a very conſiderable ſhare of the different ſpirit which diſtinguiſhes thoſe moſt admirable poets, who is capable of repreſenting in his own language, ſo true an image of their reſpective *manners*. If we look no farther than theſe works themſelves, without conſidering them with reſpect to any attempts of the ſame nature which have been made by others, we ſhall have ſufficient reaſon to eſteem them for their own intrinſic merit. But how will this uncommon genius riſe in our admiration, when we compare his claſſical tranſlations with thoſe ſimilar performances,

which

which have employed ſome of the moſt celebrated of our poets? I have lately been turning over the Iliad with this view; and perhaps, it will be no unentertaining amuſement to you, to examine the ſeveral copies which I have collected of the original, as taken by ſome of the moſt conſiderable of our Engliſh maſters. To ſingle them out for this purpoſe according to the order of the particular books, or paſſages, upon which they have reſpectively exerciſed their pencils, the pretenſions of Mr. Tickel ſtand firſt to be examined.

The action of the Iliad opens, you know, with the ſpeech of Chryſes, whoſe daughter, having been taken captive by the Grecians, was allotted to Agamemnon. This venerable prieſt of Apollo is repreſented as addreſſing himſelf to the Grecian chiefs, in the following pathetic ſimplicity of eloquence:

Ατρειδαι τε, και αλλοι ευκνημιδες Αχαιοι,
Υμιν μεν θεοι δοιεν, ολυμπια δωματ' εχοντες,
Εκπερσαι Πριαμοιο πτολιν, ευ δ' οικαδ' ικεσθαι·
Παιδα δε μοι λυσαιτε φιλην, τα δ' αποινα δεχεσθε,
Αζομενοι Διος υιον εκηβολον Απολλωνα. i. 17.

Great

Great Atreus' ſons and warlike Greece, attend,
So may th' immortal Gods your cauſe defend,
So may you Priam's lofty bulwarks burn,
And rich in gather'd ſpoils to Greece return,
As, for theſe gifts, my daughter you beſtow,
And rev'rence due to great Apollo ſhew,
Jove's fav'rite offspring, terrible in war,
Who ſends his ſhafts unerring from afar.

TICKEL.

That affecting tenderneſs of the father, which Homer has marked out by the melancholy flow of the line, as well as by the endearing expreſſion of

Παιδα δε μοι λυσαιτε φιλην,

is entirely loſt by Mr. Tickel. When Chryſes coldly mentions his daughter, without a ſingle epithet of concern or affection, he ſeems much too indifferent himſelf to move the audience in his favor. But the whole paſſage as it ſtands in Mr. Pope's Iliad, is in general animated with a far more lively ſpirit of poetry. Who can obſerve the moving poſture of ſupplication in which he has drawn the venerable old prieſt, ſtretching out his arms in all the affecting

ing warmth of intreaty, without ſharing in his diſtreſs, and melting into pity?

Ye kings and warriors! may your vows be crown'd,
And Troy's proud walls lie level with the ground:
May Jove reſtore you, when your toils are o'er,
Safe to the pleaſures of your native ſhore:
But, oh! relieve a wretched parent's pain,
And give Chryſeïs to theſe arms again.
If mercy fail, yet let my preſents move,
And dread avenging Phœbus, ſon of Jove.

POPE.

The inſinuation with which Chryſes cloſes his ſpeech, that the Grecians muſt expect the indignation of Apollo would purſue them if they rejected the petition of his prieſt, is happily intimated by a ſingle epithet:

And dread avenging *Phœbus,*

whereas the other tranſlator takes the compaſs of three lines to expreſs the ſame thought leſs ſtrongly.

WHEN the heralds are ſent by Agamemnon to Achilles, in order to demand Briſeïs; that chief is prevailed upon to part with

with her: and accordingly directs Patroclus to deliver up this contested beauty, into their hands;

Πατροκλῳ δε φιλῳ επεπειθεθ' εταιρῳ,
Εκ δ' αγαγε κλισιης Βρισηϊδα καλλιπαρῃον,
Δωκε δ' αγειν· τω δ' αυ̃ις ἰτην παρα νηας Αχαιων.
Η δ' ακεκων' αμα πισι γυνη κιεν· i. 345.

The beauty of Chryseïs, as described in these lines, together with the reluctance with which she is here represented as forced from her lord, cannot but touch the reader in a very sensible manner. Mr. Tickel, however, has debased this affecting picture, by the most unpoetical and familiar diction. I will not delay you with making my objections in form to his language; but have distinguished the exceptionable expressions, in the lines themselves:

Patroclus his dear friend *oblig'd*,
And usher'd in *the lovely weeping maid*;
Sore sigh'd she, *as the heralds took her hand,*
And oft look'd back, slow-moving o'er the strand.
TICKEL.

Our British Homer has restored this piece to its original grace and delicacy:

Patroclus

Patroclus now th' unwilling beauty brought:
She, in ſoft ſorrows, and in penſive thought,
Paſs'd ſilent, as the heralds held her hand,
And oft look'd back, ſlow-moving o'er the
ſtrand. POPE.

THE tumultuous behavior of Achilles, as deſcribed by Homer in the lines immediately following, afford a very pleaſing and natural contraſt to the more compoſed and ſilent ſorrow of Briſeïs. The poet repreſents that hero as ſuddenly ruſhing out from his tent, and flying to the ſea-ſhore, where he gives vent to his indignation; and in bitterneſs of ſoul complains to Thetis, not only of the diſhonour brought upon him by Agamemnon, but of the injuſtice even of Jupiter himſelf:

αυταρ Αχιλλευς
Δακρυσας, εταρων αφαρ εζετο νοσφι λιαθεις,
Θιν' εφ' αλος πολιης, οροων επι οινοπα πονΤον.
Πολλα δε μητερι φιλη ηρησατο χειρας ορεγνυς.
&c. i. 348.

Mr. Tickel, in rendering the ſenſe of theſe lines, has riſen into a ſome what higher flight of poetry than uſual. However, you will obſerve

obſerve his expreſſion in one or two places is exceedingly languid and proſaical; as the epithet he has given to the waves is highly injudicious. *Curling billows* might be very proper in deſcribing a calm, but ſuggeſts too pleaſing an image to be applied to the ocean when repreſented as *black with ſtorms.*

The widow'd hero, when the fair was gone,
Far from his friends ſat bath'd in tears, alone.
On the cold beach he ſate, and fix'd his eyes
Where, black with ſtorms, the curling billows
riſe.
And as the ſea wide-rolling he ſurvey'd
With out-ſtrech'd arms to his fond mother
pray'd. TICKEL.

Mr. Pope has opened the thought in theſe lines with great dignity of numbers, and exquiſite propriety of imagination; as the additional circumſtances which he has thrown in, are ſo many beautiful improvements upon his author:

Not ſo his loſs the fierce Achilles bore:
But ſad retiring to the ſounding ſhore,
O'er the wild margin of the deep he hung,
That kindred deep from which his mother
ſprung:

Then

Then bath'd in tears of anger and diſdain,
Thus loud lamented to the ſtormy main. POPE.

APOLLO having ſent a plague among the Grecians, in reſentment of the injury done to his prieſt Chryſes by detaining his daughter, Agamemnon conſents that Chryſeïs ſhall be reſtored. Accordingly a ſhip is fitted out under the command of Ulyſſes, who is employed to conduct the damſel to her father. That hero and his companions being arrived at Chryſa, the place to which they were bound, deliver up their charge; and having performed a ſacrifice to Apollo, ſet ſail early the next morning for the Grecian camp. Upon this occaſion Homer exhibits to us a moſt beautiful ſea-piece:

Ημος δ' ηελιος καλεδυ, και επι κνεφας ηλθε,
Δη τοτε κοιμησαντο παρα πρυμνησια νηος.
Ημος δ' ηριγψεια φανη ροδοδακτυλος Ηως,
Και τοτ' επειτ' αναϊξας μετα στρατον ευρυν Αχαιων.
Τοισιν δ' ικμενον κρον ιει εκαεργος Απολλων.
Οι δ' ιστον στησαντ', ανα θ' ιστια λευκα πετασαν.
Εν δ' ανεμος πρησεν μεσον ιστιον, αμφι δε κυμα
Στειρη πορφυρεον μεγαλ' ιαχε, νηος ιουσης·
Η δ' εθεεν κατα κυμα δια πρηστησα κελευθα.

i. 474.

If there is any paſſage throughout Mr. Tickel's tranſlation of this book, which has the leaſt pretence to ſtand in competition with Mr. Pope's verſion; it is undoubtedly that which correſponds with the Greek lines juſt now quoted. It would indeed be an inſtance of great partiality not to acknowledge, they breathe the true ſpirit of poetry; and I muſt own myſelf at a loſs which to prefer upon the whole; tho I think Mr. Pope is evidently ſuperior to his rival, in his manner of opening the deſcription:

At ev'ning thro the ſhore diſpers'd they ſleep,
Huſh'd by the diſtant roarings of the deep.
When now, aſcending from the ſhades of night,
Aurora glow'd in all her roſy light,
The daughter of the dawn: th'awaken'd crew
Back to the Greeks encamp'd their courſe renew,
The breezes freſhen: for with friendly gales
Apollo ſwell'd their wide-diſtended ſails;
Cleft by the rapid prow the waves divide,
And in hoarſe murmurs break on either ſide.

TICKEL.

'Twas night: the chiefs beſide their veſſel lie,
Till roſy morn had purpled o'er the ſky:

Then launch, and hoiſe the maſt; indulgent gales,
Supply'd by Phœbus, fill the ſwelling ſails;
The milk-white canvas bellying as they blow,
The parted ocean foams and roars below:
Above the bounding billows ſwift they flew,
&c. POPE.

There is ſomething wonderfully pleaſing in that judicious pauſe, which Mr. Pope has placed at the beginning of theſe lines. It neceſſarily awakens the attention of the reader, and gives a much greater air of ſolemnity to the ſcene, than if the circumſtance of the time had been leſs diſtinctly pointed out, and blended, as in Mr. Tickel's tranſlation, with the reſt of the deſcription.

HOMER has been celebrated by antiquity, for thoſe ſublime images of the ſupreme being, which he ſo often raiſes in the Iliad. It is Macrobius, if I remember right, who informs us, that Phidias being aſked from whence he took the idea of his celebrated ſtatue of Olympian Jupiter, acknowledged that he had heated his imagination by the following lines:

Η, και κυανεῃσιν επ' ὀφρυσι νευσε Κρονιων·
Αμβροσιαι δ' αρα χαιται επερρωσαντο ανακτος
Κρατος

Κρονίδης απ' αθανατοιο μεγαν δ' ελελιξεν Ολυμπον.
i. 528.

But whatever magnificence of imagery Phidias might diſcover in the original, the Engliſh reader will ſcarce, I imagine, conceive any thing very grand and ſublime from the following copy:

This ſaid, his kingly brow the ſire inclin'd,
The large black curls fell awful from behind,
Thick ſhadowing the ſtern forehead of the god:
Olympus trembled at th' almighty nod.

TICKEL.

That our modern ſtatuaries, however, may not have an excuſe for burleſquing the figure of the great father of gods and men, for want of the benefit of ſo animating a model; Mr. Pope has preſerved it to them in all its original majeſty:

He ſpoke, and awful bends his ſable brows;
Shakes his ambroſial curls and gives the nod;
The ſtamp of fate, and ſanction of the god:
High heav'n with trembling the dread ſignal took,
And all Olympus to the centre ſhook. POPE.

I TOOK occaſion in a former letter, to make ſome exceptions to a paſſage or two in the parting of Hector and Andromache, as tranſlated by your favorite poet. I ſhall now produce a few lines from the ſame beautiful epiſode for another purpoſe, and in order to ſhew, with how much more maſterly a hand, even than Dryden himſelf, our great improver of Engliſh poetry has worked upon the ſame ſubject.

As Andromache is going to the tower of Ilion, in order to take a view the field of battle, Hector meets her, together with her ſon the young Aſtyanax, at the Scæan gate. The circumſtances of this ſudden interview are finely imagined. Hector in the firſt tranſport of his joy is unable to utter a ſingle word, at the ſame time that Andromache tenderly embracing his hands, burſts out into a flood of tears:

Ητοι ο μεν μειδησεν ιδων ες παιδα σιωπη·
Ανδρομαχη δε οι αγχι παρισταθ' δακρυχεουσα,
Εν δ' αρα οι φυχειν, επος τ' εφατ', εκ τ' ονομαζε.
vi. 404.

Dryden has tranſlated this paſſage with a

cold and unpoetical fidelity to the mere letter of the original:

Hector beheld him with a ſilent ſmile,
His tender wife ſtood weeping by the while,
Preſs'd in her own his warlike hand ſhe took,
Then ſigh'd, and thus prophetically ſpoke.

DRYDEN.

But Pope has judiciouſly taken a larger compaſs, and by heightning the piece with a few additional touches, has wrought it up in all the affecting ſpirit of tenderneſs and poetry:

Silent the warrior ſmil'd, and pleas'd reſign'd
To tender paſſions all his mighty mind:
His beauteous princeſs caſt a mournful look,
Hung on his hand, and then dejected ſpoke;
Her boſom labor'd with a boding ſigh,
And the big tear ſtood trembling in her eye.

POPE.

Andromache afterwards endeavors to perſuade Hector to take upon himſelf the defence of the city, and not hazard a life ſo important, ſhe tells him, to herſelf and his ſon, in the more dangerous action of the field:

Την δ' αυτε προσεειπε μεγας κορυθαιολος Εκτωρ
Η και εμοι ταδε παντα μελει, γυναι· αλλα μαλ αινως
Αιδεομαι Τρωας και Τρωαδας ελκεσιπεπλους,
Αιχε, κακος ως, νοσφιν αλυσκαζω πολεμοιο.
vi. 440.

To whom the noble Hector thus reply'd:
That and the reſt are in my daily care;
But ſhould I ſhun the dangers of the war,
With ſcorn the Trojans would reward my pains,
And their proud ladies with their ſweeping trains.
The Grecian ſwords and lances I can bear:
But loſs of honor is my only care. DRYD.

Nothing can be more flat and unanimated than theſe lines. One may ſay upon this occaſion, what Dryden himſelf, I remember, ſomewhere obſerves, that a good poet is no more like himſelf in a dull tranſlation, than his dead carcaſe would be to his living body. To catch indeed the ſoul of our Grecian bard, and breathe his ſpirit into an Engliſh verſion, ſeems to have been a privilege reſerved ſolely for Pope:

The chief reply'd: That poſt ſhall be my care;
Nor that alone, but all the works of war.

How

How would the ſons of Troy, in arms renown'd,
And Troys proud dames, whoſe garments ſweep the ground,
Attaint the luſtre of my former name,
Should Hector baſely quit the fields of fame?

POPE.

IN the farther proſecution of this epiſode Hector propheſies his own death, and the deſtruction of Troy; to which he adds, that Andromache ſhould be led captive into Argos, where, among other diſgraceful offices, which he particularly enumerates, ſhe ſhould be employed, he tells her, in the ſervile taſk of drawing water. The different manner in which this laſt circumſtance is expreſſed by our two Engliſh poets, will afford the ſtrongeſt inſtance, how much additional force the ſame thought will receive from a more graceful turn of phraſe:

Or from deep wells the living ſtream to take,
And on thy weary ſhoulders bring it back.

DRYDEN.

or bring
The weight of waters *from Hyperia's ſpring.*

POPE.

It is in certain peculiar turns of diction that the language of poetry is principally diſtinguiſhed from that of proſe; as indeed the ſame words are, in general, common to them both. It is in a turn of this kind, that the beauty of the laſt quoted line conſiſts. For the whole grace of the expreſſion would vaniſh, if, inſtead of the two ſubſtantives which are placed at the beginning of the verſe, the poet had employed the more common ſyntax of a ſubſtantive with its adjective.

When this faithful pair have taken their final adieu of each other; Hector returns to the field of battle, at the ſame time that the diſconſolate Andromache joins her maidens in the palace. Homer deſcribes this circumſtance in the following tender manner:

Ως αρα φωνησας κορυθ' ειλετο φαιδιμος Εκτωρ
Ιππουριν· αλοχος δε φιλη οικονδε βεβηκει
Εντροπαλιζομενη, θαλερον κατα δακρυ χεουσα.
Αιψα δ' επειθ' ικανε δομους ευ ναιεταοντας
Εκτορος ανδροφονοιο· κιχησατο δ' ενδοθι πολλας
Αμφιπολους, τησιν δε γοον πασησιν ενωρσεν.
Αι μεν ετι ζωον γοον Εκτορα ω ενι οικω. vi. 494.

I will make no remarks upon the different ſucceſs

ſucceſs of our two celebrated poets in tranſlating this paſſage, but, after having laid both before you, leave their verſions to ſpeak for themſelves. The truth is, the diſparity between them is much too viſible to require any comment to render it more obſervable:

At this for new replies he did not ſtay,
But lac'd his creſted helm, and ſtrode away.
His lovely conſort to her houſe return'd,
And looking often back, in ſilence mourn'd:
Home when ſhe came, her ſecret woe ſhe vents,
And fills the palace with her loud laments.
Thoſe loud laments her echoing maids reſtore,
And Hector, yet alive, as dead deplore.

DRYDEN.

Thus having ſaid, the glorious chief reſumes
His tow'ry helmet, black with ſhading plumes.
His princeſs parts with a prophetic ſigh,
Unwilling parts, and oft reverts her eye,
That ſtream'd at ev'ry look: then moving ſlow,
Sought her own palace, and indulg'd her woe.
There, while her tears deplor'd the godlike man,
Thro all the train the ſoft infection ran;
The pious maids their mingled ſorrow ſhed,
And mourn the living Hector as the dead.

POPE.

As

As I purpoſe to follow Mr. Pope thro thoſe ſeveral parts of the Iliad, where any of our diſtinguiſhed poets have gone before him; I muſt lead you on till we come to the ſpeech of Sarpedon to Glaucus, in the xii^th Book.

Γλαυκε, τιη δη νωϊ τετιμημεθα μαλιϛα
Εδρη τε, κρεασιν τε, ιδε πλειοις δεπαεσσιν,
Εν Λυκιη, ωανϛες δε, θεας ως, εισοροωσι,
Και τεμενος νεμομεθα μεγα Ξανθοιο ωαρ' οχθας,
Καλον, Φυταλιης και αρουρης ωυροφοροιο;
Τω νυν χρη Λυκιοισι μετα ωρωτοισιν εοντας,
Εϛαμεν, ηδε μαχης καυϛειρης ανϊϛολησαι·
Οφρα τις ωδ' ειπη Λυκιων ωυκα θωρηκϛαων,
Ου μαν ακλειες Λυκιην καϛακοιρανεουϛιν
Ημετεροι βαϛιληες, εδουϛι τε ωιονα μηλα,
Οινον τ' εξαιτον, μελιηδεα· αλλ' αρα και ις
Εσθλη, επει Λυκιοισι μετα ωρωτοισι μαχονϛαι.
Ω ωεπον· ει μεν γαρ πολεμον περιτον δε φυ-
γονϛες,
Αιει δη μελλοιμεν αγηρω τ' αθανατω τε
Εσταθ', ουτε κεν αυτος εν ωρωτοισι μαχοιμην,
Ουτε κε σε ϛελλοιμι μαχην ες κυδιανειραν·
Νυν δ' (εμπης γαρ κηρες εφεϛασιν θανατοιο
Μυριαι, ας ουκ εϛι φυγειν βροτον, ουδ' υπαλυξαι)
Ιομεν· ηε τω ευχος ορεξομεν, ηε τις ημιν.

4 xii. 310.

THIS

This ſpirited ſpeech has been tranſlated by the famous author of Cooper's Hill:

Above the reſt why is our pomp and pow'r?
Our flocks, our herds, and our poſſeſſions more?
Why all the tributes land and ſea affords,
Heap'd in great chargers, load our ſumptuous boards?
Our chearful gueſts carouſe the ſparkling tears
Of the rich grape, whilſt muſic charms their ears.
Why, as we paſs, do thoſe on Xanthus' ſhore
As gods behold us, and as gods adore?
But that, as well in danger as degree,
We ſtand the firſt: that when our Lycians ſee
Our brave examples, they admiring ſay,
Behold our gallant leaders! theſe are they
Deſerve their greatneſs; and unenvy'd ſtand,
Since what they act tranſcends what they command.
Could the declining of this fate, oh! friend,
Our date to immortality extend,
Or if death ſought not them, who ſeek not death,
Would I advance? or ſhould my vainer breath
With ſuch a glorious folly thee inſpire?
But ſince with fortune nature doth conſpire,
Since age, diſeaſe, or ſome leſs noble end,
Tho not leſs certain, does our days attend;

Since

Since 'tis decreed, and to this period led
A thouſand ways, the nobleſt path we'll tread;
And bravely on, till they, or we, or all
A common ſacrifice to honor fall.

DENHAM.

MR. Pope paſſes ſo high an encomium on theſe lines, as to aſſure us, that, if his tranſlation of the ſame paſſage has any ſpirit, it is in ſome degree due to them. It is certain they have great merit, conſidering the ſtate of our Engliſh verſification when Denham floriſhed: but they will by no means ſupport Mr. Pope's compliment, any more than they will bear to ſtand in competion with his numbers. And I dare ſay, you will join with me in the ſame opinion, when you conſider the following verſion of this animated ſpeech:

Why boaſt we, Glaucus, our extended reign,
Where Xanthus' ſtreams enrich the Lycian plain?
Our num'rous herds that range the fruitful field,
And hills where vines their purple harveſt yield?
Our foaming bowls with purer nectar crown'd,
Our feaſts enhanc'd with muſic's ſprightly ſound?

Why

Why on theſe ſhores are we with joy ſurvey'd,
Admir'd as heroes, and as gods obey'd?
Unleſs great acts ſuperior merit prove,
And vindicate the bounteous powers above;
That when with wond'ring eyes our martial bands
Behold our deeds tranſcending our commands,
Such, they may cry, deſerve the ſov'reign ſtate,
Whom thoſe that envy dare not imitate.
Could all our care elude the gloomy grave,
Which claims no leſs the fearful than the brave,
For luſt of fame I ſhould not vainly dare
In fighting fields, nor urge thy ſoul to war.
But ſince, alas! ignoble age muſt come,
Diſeaſe, and death's inexorable doom;
The life, which others pay, let us beſtow,
And give to fame what we to nature owe;
Brave tho we fall, and honor'd if we live,
Or let us glory gain, or glory give.

POPE.

IF any thing can be juſtly objected to this tranſlation, it is, perhaps, that in one or two places it is too diffuſed and deſcriptive for that agitation in which it was ſpoken. In general, however, one may venture to aſſert, that it is warmed with the ſame

ſame ardor of poety and heoiſm that glows in the original; as thoſe ſeveral thoughts, which Mr. Pope has intermixed of his own, naturally ariſe out of the ſentiments of his author, and are perfectly conformable to the character and circumſtances of the ſpeaker.

I SHALL cloſe this review with Mr. Congreve; who has tranſlated the petition of Priam to Achilles for the body of his ſon Hector, together with the lamentations of Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen.

HOMER repreſents the unfortunate king of Troy, as entering unobſerved into the tent of Achilles; and illuſtrates the ſurprize which aroſe in that chief and his attendants, upon the firſt diſcovery of Priam, by the following ſimile:

Ως δ' οταν ανδρ' ατη τυκινη λαβη, ος τ' ενι πολλη
Φωτα κατακτεινας αλλον εξικετο δημον,
Ανδρος ες αφνειου, θαμβος δ' εχει εισοροωντας·
Ως Αχιλευς θαμβησεν, ιδων Πριαμον θεοειδεα.
XXIV. 480.

Nothing can be more languid and inelegant than the manner in which Congreve has rendered this paſſage:

But

But as a wretch, who has a murder done,
And ſeeking refuge, does from juſtice run;
Entring ſome houſe, in haſt, where he's unknown,
Creates amazement in the lookers on:
So did Achilles gaze, ſurpriz'd to ſee
The godlike Priam's royal miſery. CONG.

But Pope has raiſed the ſame thought with his uſual grace and ſpirit:

As when a wretch, who, conſcious of his crime,
Purſu'd for murder, flies his native clime,
Juſt gains ſome frontier, breathleſs, pale, amaz'd!
All gaze, all wonder: thus Achilles gaz'd.
POPE.

The ſpeech of Priam is wonderfully pathetic and affecting. He tells Achilles, that out of fifty ſons he had one only remaining; and of him he was now unhappily bereaved by his ſword. He conjures him by his tenderneſs for his own father to commiſerate the moſt wretched of parents, who, by an uncommon ſeverity of fate, was thus obliged to kiſs thoſe hands which were imbrued in the blood of his children:

τϰ νυν εινεχ' ικανω νηας Αχαιων,
Λυσομενος παρα σειο, φερω δ' απερεισι' αποινα.
Αλλ' αιδειο θεϰς, Αχιλευ, αυτον τ' ελεησον,
Μνησαμενος σϰ παλρος· εγω δ' ελεεινοτερος περ,
Ετλην δ', οι ϰπω τις επιχθονιος βροτος αλλος,
Ανδρος παιδοφονοιο πολι ϛομα χειρ' ορεγεσθαι.

Ὺ 501.

THESE moving lines Mr. Congreve has debaſed into the loweſt and moſt unaffecting proſe:

For his ſake only I am hither come;
Rich gifts I bring, and wealth, an endleſs ſum;
All to redeem that fatal prize you won,
A worthleſs ranſom for ſo brave a ſon.
Fear the juſt gods, Achilles, and on me
With pity look, think, you your father ſee:
Such as I am, he is; alone in this
I can no equal have in miſeries;
Of all mankind moſt wretched and forlorne,
Bow'd with ſuch weight as never has been borne;
Reduc'd to kneel and pray to you, from whom
The ſpring and ſource of all my ſorrows come;
With gifts to court mine and my country's bane,
And kiſs thoſe hands which have my children ſlain.

CONGREVE.

Nothing

Nothing could compenſate the trouble of laboring thro theſe heavy and taſteleſs rhimes, but the pleaſure of being relieved at the end of them with a more lively proſpect of poetry:

For him thro hoſtile camps I bent my way,
For him thus proſtrate at thy feet I lay;
Large gifts proportion'd to thy wrath I bear;
O hear the wretched, and the gods revere!
Think of thy father, and this face behold!
See him in me, as helpleſs and as old!
Tho not ſo wretched: there he yields to me,
The firſt of men in ſov'reign miſery;
Thus forc'd to kneel, thus grov'ling to embrace
The ſcourge and ruin of my realm and race:
Suppliant my children's murd'rer to implore,
And kiſs thoſe hands yet reeking with their gore. POPE.

ACHILLES having at length conſented to reſtore the dead body of Hector, Priam conducts it to his palace. It is there placed in funeral pomp, at the ſame time that mournful dirges are ſung over the corpſe, intermingled with the lamentations of Andromache, Hecuba, and Helen:

τον μεν επειτα
Τρητοις εν λεχεεσσι θεσαν, παρα δ' εσαν αοιδους,
Θρηνων εξαρχους, οιτε στονοεσσαν αοιδην
Οι μεν αρ' εθρηνεον, επι δε στεναχοντο γυναικες.

Ν 719.

There is ſomething extremely ſolemn and affecting in Homer's deſcription of this ſcene of ſorrow: a tranſlator, who was touched with the leaſt ſpark of poetry, could not, one ſhould imagine, but riſe beyond himſelf, in copying after ſo noble an original. It has not, however been able to elevate Mr. Congreve above his uſual flatneſs of numbers:

then laid
With care the body on a ſumptuous bed,
And round about were ſkilful ſingers plac'd,
Who wept and ſigh'd, and in ſad notes expreſs'd
Their moan: All in a chorus did agree
Of univerſal, mournful harmony.

CONGREVE.

IT would be the higheſt injuſtice to the following lines to quote them in oppoſition to thoſe of Mr. Congreve: I produce them, as marked with a vein of poetry much ſuperior even to the original:

They

They weep, and place him on a bed of ſtate.
A melancholy choir attend around
With plaintive ſighs and muſic's ſolemn ſound:
Alternately they ſing, alternate flow
Th' obedient tears, melodious in their woe;
While deeper ſorrows groan from each full heart,
And nature ſpeaks at ev'ry pauſe of art.

POPE.

THUS, Euphronius, I have brought before you ſome of the moſt renowned of our Britiſh bards, contending, as it were, for the prize of poetry: And there can be no debate to whom it juſtly belongs. Mr. Pope ſeems, indeed, to have raiſed our numbers to the higheſt poſſible perfection of ſtrength and harmony: And, I fear, all the praiſe that the beſt ſucceeding poets can expect, as to their verſification, will be, that they have happily imitated his manner. Farewel. I am, &c.

LETTER LIII.

To ORONTES.

July 2, 1741.

YOUR letter found me juſt upon my return from an excurſion into Berkſhire, where I had been paying a viſit to a friend, who is drinking the waters at Sunning-hill. In one of my morning rides over that delightful country, I accidentally paſſed thro a little village, which afforded me much agreable meditation; as in times to come, perhaps, it will be viſited by the lovers of the polite arts, with as much veneration as Virgil's tomb, or any other celebrated ſpot of antiquity. The place I mean is Binfield, where the poet to whom I am indebted (in common with every reader of taſte) for ſo much exquiſite entertainment, ſpent the earlieſt part of his youth. I will not ſcruple to confeſs that I looked upon the ſcene where he planned ſome of thoſe beautiful performances which firſt recommended him to the notice of the world, with a degree of enthuſiaſm; and could not but conſider the ground as ſacred that was impreſſed

preſſed with the footſteps of a genius that undoubtedly does the higheſt honor to our age and nation.

THE ſituation of mind in which I found myſelf upon this occaſion, ſuggeſted to my remembrance a paſſage in Tully, which I thought I never ſo thoroughly entered into the ſpirit of before. That noble author, in one of his philoſophical converſation-pieces, introduces his friend Atticus as obſerving the pleaſing effect which ſcenes of this nature are wont to have upon one's mind: *Movemur enim* (ſays that polite Roman) *neſcio quo pacto, locis ipſis, in quibus eorum, quos diligimus aut admiramur, adſunt veſtigia. Me quidem ipſæ illæ noſtræ Athenæ, non tam operibus magnificis exquiſitiſque antiquorum artibus delectant, quam recordatione ſummorum virorum, ubi quiſque habitare, ubi ſedere, ubi diſputare ſit ſolitus.*

THUS, you ſee, I could defend myſelf by an example of great authority, were I in danger upon this occaſion of being ridiculed as a romantic viſionary. But I am too well acquainted with the refined ſentiments of Orontes, to be under any apprehenſion he will condemn the impreſſions I have

here acknowledged. On the contrary, I have often heard you mention with approbation a circumſtance of this kind which is related of Silius Italicus. The annual ceremonies which that poet performed at Virgil's ſepulchre, gave you a more favorable opinion of his taſte, you confeſſed, than any thing in his works was able to raiſe.

It is certain that ſome of the greateſt names of antiquity have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by the high reverence they ſhewed to the poetical character. Scipio, you may remember, deſired to be laid in the ſame tomb with Ennius; and I am inclined to pardon that ſucceſsful madman Alexander, many of his extravagancies, for the generous regard he paid to the memory of Pindar, at the ſacking of Thebes.

There ſeems, indeed, to be ſomething in poetry, that raiſes the poſſeſſors of that very ſingular talent, far higher in the eſtimation of the world in general, than thoſe who excel in any other of the refined arts. And accordingly we find that poets have been diſtinguiſhed by antiquity with the moſt remarkable honors. Thus Homer, we are told, was deified at Smyrna; as the citizens

citizens of Mytilene ſtamped the image of Sappho upon their public coin; Anacreon received a ſolemn invitation to ſpend his days at Athens, and Hipparchus, the ſon of Piſiſtratus, fitted out a ſplendid veſſel in order to tranſport him thither: and when Virgil came into the theatre at Rome, the whole audience roſe up and ſaluted him with the ſame reſpect as they would have paid to Auguſtus himſelf.

PAINTING, one ſhould imagine, has the faireſt pretenſions of rivalling her ſiſter-art in the number of admirers; and yet, where Apelles is mentioned once, Homer is celebrated a thouſand times. Nor can this be accounted for by urging that the works of the latter are ſtill extant, while thoſe of the former have periſhed long ſince: for is not Milton's Paradiſe loſt more univerſally eſteemed, than Raphael's cartoons?

THE truth, I imagine, is, there are more who are natural judges of the harmony of numbers, than of the grace of proportions. One meets with but few who have not, in ſome degree at leaſt, a tolerable ear, but a judicious eye is a far more uncommon poſſeſſion. For as words are the univerſal me-

dium which all men employ in order to convey their ſentiments to each other; it ſeems a juſt conſequence that they ſhould be more generally formed for reliſhing and judging of performances in that way: whereas the art of repreſenting ideas by means of lines and colors, lies more out of the road of common uſe, and is therefore leſs adapted to the taſte of the general run of mankind.

I HAZARD this obſervation, in the hopes of drawing from you your ſentiments upon a ſubject, in which no man is more qualified to decide; as indeed it is to the converſation of Orontes that I am indebted for the diſcovery of many refined delicacies in the imitative arts, which, without his judicious aſſiſtance, would have lain concealed to me with other common obſervers. Adieu. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LIV.

To PHIDIPPUS.

I AM by no means ſurprized that the interview you have lately had with Cleanthes, has given you a much lower opinion of his abilities, than what you had before conceived: and ſince it has raiſed your curioſity to know my ſentiments of his character; you ſhall have them with all that freedom you may juſtly expect.

I HAVE always then conſidered Cleanthes as poſſeſſed of the moſt extraordinary talents: but his talents are of a kind, which can only be exerted upon uncommon occaſions. They are formed for the greateſt depths of buſineſs and affairs; but abſolutely out of all ſize for the ſhallows of ordinary life. In circumſtances that require the moſt profound reaſonings, in incidents that demand the moſt penetrating politics; there Cleanthes would ſhine with ſupreme luſtre. But view him in any ſituation inferior to theſe; place him where he cannot raiſe admiration, and he will moſt probably ſink into contempt. Cleanthes, in ſhort,

wants

wants nothing but the addition of certain minute accompliſhments, to render him a finiſhed character: but being wholly deſtitute of thoſe little talents which are neceſſary to render a man uſeful or agreable in the daily commerce of the world, thoſe great abilities which he poſſeſſes, lie unobſerved or neglected.

He often indeed gives one occaſion to reflect how neceſſary it is to be maſter of a ſort of under-qualities, in order to ſet off and recommend thoſe of a ſuperior nature. To know how to deſcend with grace and eaſe into ordinary occaſions, and to fall in with the leſs important parties and purpoſes of mankind, is an art of more general influence, perhaps, than is uſually imagined.

If I were to form therefore a youth for the world, I ſhould certainly endeavor to cultivate in him theſe ſecondary qualifications; and train him up to an addreſs in thoſe lower arts, which render a man agreable in converſation, or uſeful to the innocent pleaſures and accommodations of life. A general ſkill and taſte of this kind with moderate abitities will in moſt inſtances, I believe, prove more ſucceſsful in the world,

than a much higher degree of capacity without them. I am, &c.

LETTER LV.

To EUPHRONIUS.

July 17, 1730.

IF the temper and turn of Timanthes had not long prepared me for what has happened, I ſhould have received your account of his death with more ſurprize; but I ſuſpected from our earlieſt acquaintance, that his ſentiments and diſpoſition would lead him into a ſatiety of life, much ſooner than nature would probably carry him to the end of it. When unſettled principles fall in with a conſtitutional gloomineſs of mind, it is no wonder the *tædium vitæ* ſhould gain daily ſtrength, till it puſhes a man to ſeek relief againſt this moſt deſperate of all diſtempers, from the point of a ſword, or the bottom of a river.

BUT to learn to accommodate our taſte to that portion of happineſs which Provdence has ſet before us, is of all the leſſons of philoſophy ſurely the moſt neceſſary.

High

High and exquiſite gratifications are not conſiſtent with the appointed meaſures of humanity: and, perhaps, if we would fully enjoy the reliſh of our being, we ſhould rather conſider the miſeries we eſcape, than too nicely examine the intrinſic worth of the happineſs we poſſeſs. It is, at leaſt, the buſineſs of true wiſdom to bring together every circumſtance, which may light up a flame of chearfulneſs in the mind: and tho' we muſt be inſenſible if it ſhould perpetually burn with the ſame unvaried brightneſs; yet prudence ſhould preſerve it as a ſacred fire, which is never to be totally extinguiſhed.

I AM perſuaded, this diſguſt of life is frequently indulged out of a principle of mere vanity. It is eſteemed as a mark of uncommon refinement, and as placing a man above the ordinary level of his ſpecies, to ſeem ſuperior to the vulgar feelings of happineſs. True good-ſenſe, however, moſt certainly conſiſts, not in deſpiſing, but in managing, our ſtock of life to the beſt advantage; as a chearful acquieſcence in the meaſures of Providence, is one of the ſtrongeſt ſymptoms of a well-conſtituted mind.

mind. Self-wearineſs is a circumſtance that ever attends folly; and to contemn our being, is the greateſt, and indeed the peculiar, infirmity of human nature. It is a noble ſentiment which Tully puts into the mouth of Cato, in his treatiſe upon old age: *Non lubet mihi* (ſays that venerable Roman) *deplorare vitam, quod multi, et ii docti, ſæpe fecerunt; neque me vixiſſe pœnitet: quoniam ita vixi, ut non fruſtra me natum exiſtimem.*

It is in the power indeed, of but a very ſmall proportion of mankind, to act the ſame glorious part that afforded ſuch high ſatisfaction to this diſtinguiſhed patriot: but the number is yet far more inconſiderable of thoſe, who cannot, in any ſtation, ſecure to themſelves a ſufficient fund of complacency to render life juſtly valuable. Who is it that is placed out of the reach of the higheſt of all gratifications, thoſe of the generous affections; and that cannot provide for his own happineſs by contributing ſomething to the welfare of others? As this diſeaſe of the mind generally breaks out with moſt violence in thoſe, who are ſuppoſed to be endowed with a greater delicacy of taſte and reaſon, than is the uſual

allotment of their fellow-creatures; one may aſk them, whether there is any ſatiety in the purſuits of uſeful knowledge? or, if one can ever be weary of benefiting mankind? Will not the fine arts ſupply a laſting feaſt to the mind? Or can there be wanting a pleaſurable employment, ſo long as there remains even one advantageous truth to be diſcovered or confirmed? To complain that life has no joys, while there is a ſingle creature whom we can relieve by our bounty, aſſiſt by our counſels, or enliven by our preſence, is to lament the loſs of that which we poſſeſs, and is juſt as rational as to die of thirſt with the cup in our hands. But the misfortune is, when a man is ſettled into a habit of receiving all his pleaſures from the mere ſelfiſh indulgencies; he wears out of his mind the reliſh of every nobler enjoyment, at the ſame time that his powers of the ſenſual kind are growing more languid by each repetition. It is no wonder therefore he ſhould fill up the meaſure of his gratifications, long before he has completed the circle of his duration; and either wretchedly ſit down the remainder

er of his days in diſcontent, or raſhly throw them up in deſpair. Farewel. I am, &c.

LETTER LVI.

To TIMOCLEA.

October 1, 1743.

CERTAINLY, Timoclea, you have a paſſion for the marvellous beyond all power of gratification. There is not an adventurer throughout the whole regions of chevalry, with whom you are unacquainted; and have wondered thro more folios than would furniſh out a decent library. Mine, at leaſt, you have totally exhauſted, and have ſo cleared my ſhelves of knights-errant, that I have not a ſingle hero remaining that ever was regaled in bower or hall. But tho you have drained me of my whole ſtock of romance, I am not entirely unprovided for your entertainment; and have encloſed a little Grecian fable for your amuſement, which was lately tranſmitted to me by one of my friends. He diſcovered it, he tells me, among ſome old manuſcripts, which have been long, it ſeems, in the

the poſſeſſion of his family: and, if you will rely upon his judgment, it is a tranſlation by Spenſer's own hand.

THIS is all the hiſtory I have to give you of the following piece: the *genuineneſs* of which I leave to be ſettled between my friend and the critics, and am, &c.

The Transformation of LYCON and EUPHORMIUS.

I.

DEEM not, ye plaintive crew, that ſuffer wrong,
Ne thou, O man! who deal'ſt the tort, miſween
The equal gods, who heav'n's ſky manſions throng,
(Though viewleſs to the eyne they diſtant ſheen)
Spectators reckleſs of our actions been.
Turning the volumes of grave ſages old,
Where auncient ſaws in fable may be ſeen,
This truth I fond in paynim tale enroll'd;
Which for enſample drad my muſe ſhall here unfold.

II.

What time Arcadia's flowret vallies fam'd
Pelaſgus, firſt of monarchs old, obey'd,
There wonn'd a wight, and Lycon was he nam'd,
Unaw'd by conſcience, of no gods afraid,
Ne juſtice rul'd his heart, ne mercy ſway'd.

Some

Some held him kin to that abhorred race,
Which heav'n's high tow'rs with mad emprize
aſſay'd;
And ſome his cruel lynage did ytrace
From fell Erynnis join'd in Pluto's dire embrace.

III.

But he, perdy, far other tale did feign,
And claim'd alliaunce with the ſiſters nine;
And deem'd himſelf (what deems not pride ſo vain?)
The peerleſs paragon of wit divine,
Vaunting that ev'ry foe ſhould rue its tine.
Right doughty wight! yet, ſooth, withouten ſmart,
All pow'rleſs fell the loſels ſhafts malign:
'Tis vertue's arm to wield wit's heav'nly dart,
Point its keen barb with force, and ſend it to the heart.

IV.

One only impe he had, Paſtora hight,
Whoſe ſweet amenaunce pleas'd each ſhepherd's eye:
Yet pleas'd ſhe not baſe Lycon's evil ſpright,
Tho' blame in her not malice moten 'ſpy,
Clear, without ſpot, as ſummer's cloudleſs ſky.
Hence poets feign'd, Lycean Pan array'd
In Lycon's form, enflam'd with paſſion high,
Deceiv'd her mother in the covert glade;
And from the ſtol'n embrace yſprong the heav'nly
maid.

V.

Thus fabling they: mean while the damſel fair
A ſhepherd youth remark'd, as o'er the plain
She deffly pac'd elong ſo debonair:
Seem'd ſhe as one of Dian's choſen train.
Full many a fond excuſe he knew to feign,
In ſweet converſe to while with her the day,
'Till love unwares his heedleſs heart did gain.
Nor dempt he, ſimple wight, no mortal may
The blinded God once harbour'd, when he liſt, foreſay.

VI.

Now much he meditates if yet to ſpeak,
And now reſolves his paſſion to conceal:
But ſure, quoth he, my ſeely heart will break
If aye I ſmother what I aye muſt feel.
At length by hope emboldened to reveal,
The lab'ring ſecret dropped from his tong.
Whiles frequent ſingults check'd his faltring tale,
In modeſt wiſe her head Paſtora hong:
For never maid more chaſte inſpired ſhepherd's ſong.

VII.

What needs me to recount in long detail
The tender parley which theſe lemans held:
How oft he vow'd his love her ne'er ſhould fail;
How oft the ſtream from forth her eyne out-well'd,
Doubting if conſtancy yet ever dwell'd
In heart of youthful wight: ſuffice to know,
Each riſing doubt he in her boſome quell'd.

So parted they, more blithſome both, I trow:
For rankling love conceal'd, me ſeems, is deadly woe.

VIII.

Eftſoons to Lycon ſwift the youth did fare,
(Lagg'd ever youth when Cupid urg'd his way?)
And ſtraight his gentle purpoſe did declare,
And ſooth the mount'naunce of his herds diſplay.
Ne Lycon meant his ſuiten to foreſay:
" Be thine Paſtora (quoth the maſker ſly)
" And twice two thouſand ſheep her dow'r
" ſhall pay."
Beat then the lover's heart with joyaunce high;
Ne dempt that aught his bliſs could now betray,
Ne gueſs'd that foul deceit in Lycon's boſome lay.

IX.

So forth he yode to ſeek his rev'rend ſire;
(The good Euphormius ſhepherds him did call)
How ſweet Paſtora did his boſome fire,
Her worth, her promis'd flocks, he tolden all.
" Ah! nere, my ſon let Lycon thee enthrall,
(Reply'd the ſage, in wiſe experience old)
" Smooth is his tong, but full of guile withal,
" In promiſe faithleſs, and in vaunting bold:
" Ne ever lamb of his will bleat within thy fold."

X.

With words prophetick thus Euphormius ſpake:
And fact confirm'd what wiſdom thus foretold.
Full many a mean deviſe did Lycon make,
The hoped day of ſpouſal to with-hold,

Framing new trains when nought mote ſerve
his old.
Nath'leſs he vow'd, Cyllene, cloud-topt hill,
Should ſooner down the lowly delve be roll'd,
Than he his plighted promiſe nould fulfill:
But when, perdy, or where, the caitive ſayen nill.

XI.

Whiles thus the tedious ſuns had journey'd round,
Ne ought mote now the lovers hearts divide,
Ne truſt was there, ne truth in Lycon found;
The maid with matron Juno for her guide,
The youth by Concord *led, in ſecret hy'd*
To Hymen's ſacred fane: The honeſt deed [*ty'd.*
Each god approv'd, and cloſe the bands were
Certes, till happier moments ſhould ſucceed,
No prying eyne they ween'd their emprize mote areed.

XII.

But prying eyne of Lycon 'twas in vain
(Right practick in diſguiſe) to hope beware.
He trac'd their covert ſteps to Hymen's fane,
And joy'd to find them in his long-laid ſnare.
Algates, in ſemblaunt ire, he 'gan to ſwear,
And roaren loud as in diſpleaſaunce high;
Then out he hurlen forth his daughter fair,
Forelore, the houſeleſs child of miſery,
Expos'd to killing cold, and pinching penury.

XIII. *Ah!*

XIII.

Ah! whither now ſhall ſad Paſtora wend,
To want abandon'd and by wrongs oppreſt?
Who ſhall the wretched out-caſt's teen befriend?
Lives mercy then, if not in parent's breaſt?
Yes, MERCY *lives, the gentle goddeſs bleſt,*
At Jove's right hand, to Jove for ever dear,
Aye at his feet ſhe pleads the cauſe diſtreſt,
To ſorrow's plaints ſhe turns his equal ear,
And wafts to heav'n's ſtar-throne fair vertue's ſilent tear.

XIV.

Twas SHE that bade Euphormius quell each thought,
That well mote riſe to check his gen'rous aid.
Tho high the torts which Lycon him had wrought,
Tho few the flocks his humble paſtures fed;
When as he learn'd Paſtora's hapleſs ſted,
His breaſt humane with wonted pity flows.
He op'd his gates, the naked exile led
Beneath his roof; a decent drapet throws
O'er her cold limbs, and ſooths her undeſerved woes.

XV.

Now loud-tongu'd Rumour bruited round the tale:
Th' aſtoned ſwains uneath could credence give,
That in Arcadia's unambitious vale
A faytor falſe as Lycon e'er did live.

But Jove (who in high heav'n does mortals prive,
And ev'ry deed in golden ballance weighs)
To earth his flaming charet baden drive,
And down deſcends, enwrapt in peerleſs blaze,
To deal forth guerdon meet to good and evil ways.

XVI.

Where Eurymanthus, crown'd with many a wood,
His ſilver ſtream through daſy'd vales does lead,
Stretch'd on the flow'ry marge, in reckleſs mood,
Proud Lycon ſought by charm of jocund reed
To lull the dire remorſe of tortious deed.
Him Jove accoſts, in rev'rend ſemblaunce dight
Of good Euphormius, and 'gan mild areed
Of compact oft confirm'd, of fay yplight,
Of nature's tender tye, of ſacred rule of right.

XVII.

With lofty eyne, half loth to looke ſo low,
Him Lycon view'd, and with ſwol'n ſurquedry
'Gan rudely treat his ſacred old: When now
Forth ſtood the god confeſt that rules the ſky,
In ſudden ſheen of drad divinity: [*ſaid,*
" *And know, falſe man,*" *the lord of thunders*
" *Not unobſerv'd by heav'n's all-perſent eye*
" *Thy cruel deeds: nor ſhall be unappay'd:*
"*Go! be inform that beſt beſeems thy thews, array'd.*"

XVIII. *Whiles*

XVIII.

Whiles yet he ſpake, th' affrayed trembling wight
Tranſmew'd to blatant beaſt, with hideous howl
Ruſh'd headlong forth, in well-deſerved plight,
Mid'ſt dragons, minotaurs, and fiends to prowl,
A wolf in form as erſt a wolf in ſoul!
To Pholoë, foreſt wild, he hy'd away,
The horrid haunt of ſavage monſters foul.
There helpleſs innocence is ſtill his prey,
Thief of the bleating fold, and ſhepherd's dire diſmay.

XIX.

Tho Jove to good Euphormius' cot did wend,
Where peaceful dwelt the man of vertue high,
Each ſhepherd's praiſe and eke each ſhepherd's friend,
In ev'ry act of ſweet humanity.
Him Jove approaching in mild majeſty,
Greeted all hail! then bade him join the throng
Of glit'rand lights that gild the glowing ſky.
There ſhepherds nightly view his orb yhong,
Where bright he ſhines eterne, the brighteſt ſtars among.

LETTER LVII.

To CLYTANDER.

February 8, 1739.

IF there was any thing in my former letter inconſiſtent with that eſteem which is juſtly due to the Antients, I deſire to re-

tract it in this; and disavow every expression which might seem to give precedency to the moderns in works of genius. I am so far indeed from entertaining the sentiments you impute to me, that I have often endeavored to account for that superiority which is so visible in the compositions of their poets: and have frequently assigned their religion as in the number of those causes, which probably concurred to give them this remarkable preheminence. That enthusiasm which is so essential to every true artist in the poetical way, was considerably heightened and enflamed by the whole turn of their sacred doctrines; and the fancied presence of their Muses had almost as wonderful an effect upon their thoughts and language, as if they had been really and divinely inspired. Whilst all nature was supposed to swarm with divinities, and every oak and fountain was believed to be the residence of some presiding deity; what wonder if the poet was animated by the imagined influence of such exalted society, and found himself transported beyond the ordinary limits of sober humanity? The mind, when attended only

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by mere mortals of ſuperior powers, is obſerved to riſe in her ſtrength; and her faculties open and enlarge themſelves when ſhe acts in the view of thoſe, for whom ſhe has conceived a more than common reverence. But when the force of ſuperſtition moves in concert with the powers of imagination, and genius is enflamed by devotion, poetry muſt ſhine out in all her brighteſt perfection and ſplendor.

WHATEVER therefore the philoſopher might think of the religion of his country; it was the intereſt of the poet to be thoroughly orthodox. If he gave up his creed, he muſt renounce his numbers; and there could be no inſpiration where there were no Muſes. This is ſo true, that it is in compoſitions of the poetical kind alone, that the antients ſeem to have the principal advantage over the moderns: in every other ſpecies of writing one might venture perhaps to aſſert that theſe latter ages have, at leaſt, equalled them. When I ſay ſo, I do not confine myſelf to the productions of our own nation, but comprehend likewiſe thoſe of our neighbors: and with that extent the obſervation will poſſibly hold

true, even without an exception in favor of hiſtory and oratory.

But whatever may with juſtice be determined concerning that queſtion; it is certain, at leaſt, that the practice of all ſucceeding poets confirms the notion for which I am principally contending. Tho the altars of paganiſm have many ages ſince been thrown down, and groves are no longer ſacred; yet the language of the poets has not changed with the religion of the times, but the gods of Greece and Rome are ſtill adored in modern verſe. Is not this a confeſſion, that fancy is enlivened by ſuperſtition, and that the antient bards catched their rapture from the old mythology? I will own, however, that I think there is ſomething ridiculous in this unnatural adoption, and that a modern poet makes but an aukward figure with his antiquated gods. When the pagan ſyſtem was ſanctified by popular belief, a piece of machinery of that kind, as it had the air of probability, afforded a very ſtriking manner of celebrating any remarkable circumſtance, or raiſing any common one. But now that this ſuperſtition is no longer ſupported by vulgar opinion,

opinion, it has loſt its principal grace and efficacy, and ſeems to be, in general, the moſt cold and unintereſting method in which a poet can work up his ſentiments. What, for inſtance, can be more unaffecting and ſpiritleſs, than the compliment which Boileau has paid to Louis the XIVth on his famous paſſage over the Rhine? He repreſents the Naiads, you may remember, as alarming the god of that river with an account of the march of the French monarch; upon which the river-god aſſumes the appearance of an old experienced commander, and flies to a Dutch fort, in order to exhort the garriſon to ſally out and diſpute the intended paſſage. Accordingly they range themſelves in form of battle with the Rhine at their head, who, after ſome vain efforts, obſerving Mars and Bellona on the ſide of the enemy, is ſo terrified with the view of thoſe ſuperior divinities, that he moſt gallantly runs away, and leaves the hero in quiet poſſeſſion of his banks. I know not how far this may be reliſhed by critics, or juſtified by cuſtom; but as I am only mentioning my particular taſte, I will

will acknowledge, that it appears to me extremely inſipid and puerile.

I HAVE not however ſo much of the ſpirit of Typhœus in me, as to make war upon the gods without reſtriction, and attempt to exclude them from their whole poetical dominions. To repreſent natural, moral, or intellectual qualities and affections as perſons, and appropriate to them thoſe general emblems by which their powers and properties are uſually typified in pagan theology, may be allowed as one of the moſt pleaſing and graceful figures of poetical rhetoric. When Dryden, addreſſing himſelf to the month of May as to a perſon, ſays,

For thee the Graces lead the dancing Hours;

one may conſider him as ſpeaking only in metaphor: and when ſuch ſhadowy beings are thus juſt ſhewn to the imagination, and immediately withdrawn again, they certainly have a very powerful effect. But I can reliſh them no farther than as figures only: when they are extended in any ſerious compoſition beyond the limits of metaphor, and exhibited under all the various actions of real

real perſons, I cannot but conſider them as ſo many abſurdities, which cuſtom has unreaſonably authoriſed. Thus Spenſer, in one of his Paſtorals, repreſents the god of Love as flying, like a bird, from bough to bough. A ſhepherd, who hears a ruſtling among the buſhes, ſuppoſes it to be ſome game, and accordingly diſcharges his bow. Cupid returns the ſhot, and after ſeveral arrows had been mutually exchanged between them, the unfortunate ſwain diſcovers whom it is he is contending with: but as he is endeavoring to make his eſcape, receives a deſperate wound in the heel. This fiction makes the ſubject of a very pretty idyllium in one of the Greek poets; yet is extremely flat and diſguſting as it is adopted by our Britiſh bard. And the reaſon of the difference is plain: in the former it is ſupported by a popular ſuperſtition; whereas no ſtrain of imagination can give it the leaſt air of probability, as it is worked up by the latter:

Quodcunque mihi oſtendis ſic, incredulus odi.

HOR.

I MUST confeſs at the ſame time, that the inimitable Prior has introduced this fabulous

bulous ſcheme with ſuch uncommon grace, and has paid ſo many genteel compliments to his miſtreſs by the aſſiſtance of Venus and Cupid, that one is carried off from obſerving the impropriety of this machinery, by the pleaſing addreſs with which he manages it: and I never read his tender poems of this kind, without applying to him what Seneca ſomewhere ſays upon a ſimiliar occaſion: *Major ille eſt qui judicium abſtulit, quam qui meruit.*

To ſpeak my ſentiments in one word, I would leave the gods in full poſſeſſion of allegorical and burleſque poems: in all others I would never ſuffer them to make their appearance in perſon and as agents, but to enter only in ſimile, or alluſion. It is thus Waller, of all our poets, has moſt happily employed them: and his application of the ſtory of Daphne and Apollo will ſerve as an inſtance, in what manner the antient mythology may be adopted with the utmoſt propriety and beauty. Adieu. I am, &c.

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LETTER LVIII.

To EUPHRONIUS.

Auguſt 8, 1741.

I KNOW not in what diſpoſition of mind this letter may find you; but I am ſure you will not preſerve your uſual chearfulneſs of temper when I tell you that poor Hydaſpes died laſt night.

I WILL not at this time attempt to offer that conſolation to you, of which I ſtand in ſo much need myſelf. But may it not ſomewhat abate the anxiety of our mutual grief, to reflect, that however conſiderable our own loſs is, yet with reſpect to himſelf, it ſcarce deſerves to be lamented that he arrived ſo much earlier at the grave than his years and his health ſeemed to promiſe? For who, my friend, that has any experience of the world, would wiſh to extend his duration to old age? what indeed is length of days but to ſurvive all one's enjoyments, and, perhaps, to ſurvive even one's very ſelf? I have ſomewhere met with an ancient inſcription founded upon this ſentiment, which infinitely pleaſed me. It

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was fixed upon a bath, and contained an imprecation in the following terms, againſt any one who ſhould attempt to remove the building:

QVISQVIS. HOC. SVSTVLERIT.
AVT. IVSSERIT.
VLTIMVS. SVORVM. MORIATVR.

The thought is conceived with great delicacy and juſtneſs; as there cannot, perhaps, to be a ſharper calamity to a generous mind, than to ſee itſelf ſtand ſingle amidſt the ruins of whatever rendered the world moſt deſirable.

INSTANCES of the ſort I am lamenting, while the impreſſions remain freſh upon the mind, are ſufficient to damp the gayeſt hopes, and chill the warmeſt ambition. When one ſees a perſon in the full bloom of life, thus deſtroyed by one ſudden blaſt, one cannot but conſider all the diſtant ſchemes of mankind as the higheſt folly.

IT is amazing indeed that a creature ſuch as man, with ſo many memorials around him of the ſhortneſs of his duration, and who cannot enſure to himſelf even the next moment, ſhould yet plan deſigns which

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run far into futurity. The buſineſs however of life muſt be carried on, and it is neceſſary for the purpoſes of human affairs, that mankind ſhould reſolutely act upon very precarious contingencies. Too much reflection, therefore, is as inconſiſtent with the appointed meaſures of our ſtation, as too little; and there cannot be a leſs deſirable turn of mind, than one that is influenced by an over-refined philoſophy. At leaſt it is by conſiderations of this ſort, that I endeavor to call off my thoughts from purſuing too earneſtly thoſe reaſonings, which the occaſion of this letter is apt to ſuggeſt. This uſe, however, one may juſtly make of the preſent accident, that, whilſt it contracts the circle of friendſhip, it ſhould render it ſo much the more valuable to *us* who yet walk within its limits. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER LIX.

To HORTENSIUS.

May 4, 1740.

IF the ingenious piece you communicated to me, requires any farther touches of your pencil; I muſt acknowledge the truth to be, what you are inclined to ſuſpect, that my friendſhip has impoſed upon my judgment. But tho in the preſent inſtance your delicacy ſeems far too refined; yet in general, I muſt agree with you, that works of the moſt permanent kind, are not the effects of a lucky moment, nor ſtruck out at a ſingle heat. The beſt performances, indeed, have generally coſt the moſt labor; and that eaſe, which is ſo eſſential to fine writing, has ſeldom been attained without repeated and ſevere corrections: *Ludentis ſpeciem dabit et torquebitur*, is a motto that may be applied, I believe, to moſt ſucceſsful authors of genius. With as much facility as the numbers of the natural Prior ſeem to have flowed from him, they were the reſult (if I am not miſinformed) of much application: and a friend of mine,

who undertook to tranſcribe one of the nobleſt performances of the fineſt genius that this, or perhaps any age can boaſt, has often aſſured me, that there is not a ſingle line, as it is now publiſhed, which ſtands in conformity with the original manuſcript. The truth is, every ſentiment has its peculiar expreſſion, and every word its preciſe place, which do not always immediately preſent themſelves, and generally demand frequent trials before they can be properly adjuſted: not to mention the more important difficulties, which neceſſarily occur in ſettling the plan and regulating the higher parts which compoſe the ſtructure of a finiſhed work.

Thoſe indeed, who know what pangs it coſts even the moſt fertile genius to be delivered of a juſt and regular production, might be inclined, perhaps, to cry out with the moſt antient of authors, *Oh! that mine adverſary had written a book!* A writer of refined taſte has the continual mortification to find himſelf incapable of taking entire poſſeſſion of that ideal beauty, which warms and fills his imagination. His con-

ceptions ſtill riſe above all the powers of his art, and he can but faintly copy out thoſe images of perfection, which are impreſſed upon his mind. Never was any thing, ſays Tully, more beautiful than the Venus of Apelles, or the Jove of Phidias; yet were they by no means equal to thoſe high notions of beauty which animated the geniuſes of thoſe wonderful artiſts. In the ſame manner, he obſerves, the great maſters of oratory imaged to themſelves a certain perfection of eloquence, which they could only contemplate in idea, but in vain attempted to draw out in expreſſion. Perhaps no author ever perpetuated his reputation, who could write up to the full ſtandard of his own judgment: and I am perſuaded that he, who upon a ſurvey of his compoſitions can with entire complacency pronounce them good, will hardly find the world join with him in the ſame favorable ſentence.

THE moſt judicious of all poets, the inimitable Virgil, uſed to reſemble his productions to thoſe of that animal, who, agreably to the notions of the antients,

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was ſuppoſed to bring her young into the world, a mere rude and ſhapeleſs maſs: he was obliged to retouch them again and again, he acknowledged, before they acquired their proper form and beauty. Accordingly we are told, that after having ſpent eleven years in compoſing his Æneid, he intended to have ſet apart three more for the reviſal of that glorious performance. But being prevented by his laſt ſickneſs from giving thoſe finiſhing touches, which his exquiſite judgment conceived to be ſtill neceſſary, he directed his friends Tucca and Varius to burn the nobleſt poem that ever appeared in the Roman language. In the ſame ſpirit of delicacy Mr. Dryden tells us, that had he taken more time in tranſlating this author, he might poſſibly have ſucceeded better; but never, he aſſures us, could he have ſucceeded ſo well as to have ſatisfied himſelf.

In a word, Hortenſius, I agree with you, that there is nothing more difficult than to fill up the character of an author, who propoſes to raiſe a juſt and laſting admiration; who is not contented with thoſe little tranſient flaſhes of applauſe, which attend the

ordinary race of writers, but conſiders only how he may ſhine out to poſterity; who extends his views beyond the preſent generation, and cultivates thoſe productions which are to floriſh in future ages. What Sir William Temple obſerves of poetry, may be applied to every other work where taſte and imagination are concerned: "It "requires the greateſt contraries to com-"poſe it: a genius both penetrating and "ſolid; an expreſſion both ſtrong and de-"licate. There muſt be a great agitation "of mind to invent, a great calm to judge "and correct: there muſt be upon the "ſame tree, and at the ſame time, both "flower and fruit." But tho, I know, you would not value yourſelf upon any performance, wherein theſe very oppoſite and very ſingular qualities were not conſpicuous; yet I muſt remind you at the ſame time, that when the file ceaſes to poliſh, it muſt neceſſarily weaken. You will remember therefore, that there is a medium between the immoderate caution of that orator, who was three olympiads in writing a ſingle oration; and the extravagant expedition of that poet, whoſe funeral pile was com-

compoſed of his own numberleſs productions. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER LX.

To PALEMON.

May 28, 1739.

I WRITE this while Cleora is angling by my ſide, under the ſhade of a ſpreading elm that hangs over the banks of our river. A nightingale, more harmonious even than Strada's, is ſerenading us from a hawthorn buſh which ſmiles with all the gaiety of youth and beauty; while

gentle gales,
Fanning their odorif'rous wings, diſpenſe
Native perfumes, and whiſper whence they ſtole
Thoſe balmy ſpoils. MILT.

WHILST I am thus enjoying the innocent luxury of this vernal delight, I look back upon thoſe ſcenes of turbulence wherein I was once engaged, with more than ordinary diſtaſte; and deſpiſe my ſelf for ever having entertained ſo mean a thought as to be rich and great. One of our monarchs

uſed to ſay, "that he looked upon thoſe to "be the happieſt men in the nation, whoſe "fortune had placed them in the country, "above a high-conſtable, and below the "trouble of a juſtice of peace." It is in a mediocrity of this happy kind that I here paſs my life: with a fortune far above the neceſſity of engaging in the drudgery of buſineſs; and with deſires much too humble to have any reliſh for the ſplendid baits of ambition.

You muſt not, however, imagine that I affect the Stoic, or pretend to have eradicated all my paſſions; the ſum of my philoſophy amounts to no more than to cheriſh none but ſuch as I may eaſily and innocently gratify, and to baniſh all the reſt as ſo many bold intruders upon my repoſe. I endeavor to practiſe the maxim of a French poet, by conſidering ever thing that is not within my poſſeſſion as not worth having:

pour m'aſſûrer le ſeul bien
Que l'on doit eſtimer au monde,
Tout ce que je n'ai pas, je le compte pour rien.

Is it not poſſible, Palemon, to reconcile you to theſe unaſpiring ſentiments, and to lower your flight to the humble level of genuine

nuine happineſs? Let me at leaſt prevail with you to ſpare a day or two from the *certamina divitiarum* (as Horace I think calls them) from thoſe ſplendid conteſts in which you are engaged, juſt to take a view of the ſort of life we lead in the country. If there is any thing wanting to complete the happineſs I here find, it is that you are ſo ſeldom a witneſs to it. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER LXI.

To EUPHRONIUS.

July 3, 1744.

THE beauties of ſtyle ſeem to be generally conſidered as below the attention both of an author and a reader. I know not therefore, whether I may venture to acknowledge, that among the numberleſs graces of your late performance, I particularly admired that ſtrength and elegance with which you have enforced and adorned the nobleſt ſentiments.

THERE was a time however (and it was a period of the trueſt refinements) when an excel-

excellence of this kind was eſteemed in the number of the politeſt accompliſhments; as it was the ambition of ſome of the greateſt names of antiquity to diſtinguiſh themſelves in the improvements of their native tongue. Julius Cæſar, who was not only the greateſt hero, but the fineſt gentleman that ever, perhaps, appeared in the world, was deſirous of adding this talent to his other moſt ſhining endowments: and we are told he ſtudied the language of his country with much application; as we are ſure he poſſeſſed it in its higheſt elegance. What a loſs, Euphronius, is it to the literary world, that the treatiſe which he wrote upon this ſubject, is periſhed with many other valuable works of that age? But tho we are deprived of the benefit of his obſervations, we are happily not without an inſtance of their effects; and his own memoirs will ever remain as the beſt and brighteſt exemplar, not only of true generalſhip, but of fine writing. He publiſhed them, indeed, only as materials for the uſe of thoſe who ſhould be diſpoſed to enlarge upon that remarkable period of the Roman ſtory; yet the purity and gracefulneſs of his ſtyle were ſuch, that no judi-

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cious writer durſt attempt to touch the ſubject after him.

HAVING produced ſo illuſtrious an inſtance in favor of an art, for which I have ventured to admire you; it would be impertinent to add a ſecond, were I to cite a leſs authority than that of the immortal Tully. This noble author, in his dialogue concerning the celebrated Roman orators, frequently mentions it as a very high encomium, that they poſſeſſed the elegance of their native language; and introduces Brutus as declaring, that he ſhould prefer the honor of being eſteemed the great maſter and improver of Roman eloquence, even to the glory of many triumphs.

BUT to add reaſon to precedent, and to view this art in its uſe as well as its dignity; will it not be allowed of ſome importance, when it is conſidered, that eloquence is one of the moſt conſiderable auxiliaries of truth? Nothing indeed contributes more to ſubdue the mind to the force of reaſon, than her being ſupported by the powerful aſſiſtance of maſculine and vigorous oratory. As on the contrary the moſt legitimate arguments may be diſappointed of that ſucceſs they deſerve,

ſerve, by being attended with a ſpiritleſs and enfeebled expreſſion. Accordingly, that moſt elegant of writers, the inimitable Mr. Addiſon obſerves, in one of his eſſays, that "there is as much difference between comprehending a thought cloathed in Cicero's language and that of an ordinary writer, as between ſeeing an object by the light of a taper or the light of the ſun."

It is ſurely then a very ſtrange conceit of the celebrated Malbranche, who ſeems to think the pleaſure which ariſes from peruſing a well written piece, is of the criminal kind, and has its ſource in the weakneſs and effeminacy of the human heart. A man muſt have a very uncommon ſeverity of temper indeed, who can find any thing to condemn in adding charms to truth, and gaining the heart by captivating the ear; in uniting roſes with the thorns of ſcience, and joining pleaſure with inſtruction.

The truth is, the mind is delighted with a fine ſtyle, upon the ſame principle that it prefers regularity to confuſion, and beauty to deformity. A taſte of this ſort is indeed ſo far from being a mark of any depravity

pravity of our nature, that I ſhould rather conſider it as an evidence, in ſome degree, of the moral rectitude of its conſtitution, as it is a proof of its retaining ſome reliſh at leaſt of harmony and order.

One might be apt indeed, to ſuſpect that certain writers amongſt us had conſidered all beauties of this ſort, in the ſame gloomy view with Malbranche: or at leaſt that they avoided every refinement in ſtyle, as unworthy a lover of truth and philoſophy. Their ſentiments are ſunk by the loweſt expreſſions, and ſeem condemned to the firſt curſe, of *creeping upon the ground all the days of their life*. Others, on the contrary, miſtake pomp for dignity; and, in order to raiſe their expreſſions above vulgar language, lift them up beyond common apprehenſions, eſteeming it (one ſhould imagine) a mark of their genius, that it requires ſome ingenuity to penetrate their meaning. But how few writers, like Euphronius, know to hit that true medium which lies between thoſe diſtant extremes? How ſeldom do we meet with an author, whoſe expreſſions, like thoſe of my friend, are glowing but not glaring, whoſe metaphors are natural but

not

not common, whoſe periods are harmonious but not poetical; in a word, whoſe ſentiments are *well ſet*, and ſhewn to the underſtanding in their trueſt and moſt advantageous luſtre. I am, &c.

LETTER LXII.

To ORONTES.

I INTENDED to have cloſed with your propoſal, and paſſed a few weeks with you at * * * but ſome unlucky affairs have intervened, which will engage me, I fear, the remaining part of this ſeaſon.

AMONG the amuſements which the ſcene you are in affords, I ſhould have eſteemed the converſation of Timoclea as a very principal entertainment; and as I know you are fond of ſingular characters, I recommend that lady to your acquaintance.

TIMOCLEA was once a beauty; but ill health, and worſe fortune, have ruined thoſe charms, which time would yet have ſpared. However, what has ſpoiled her for a miſtreſs, has improved her as a companion; and ſhe is far more converſable

now,

now, as ſhe has much leſs beauty, than when I uſed to ſee her once a week triumphing in the drawing-room. For, as few women (whatever they may pretend) will value themſelves upon their minds, while they can gain admirers by their perſons, Timoclea never thought of charming by her wit, till ſhe had no chance of making conqueſts by her beauty. She has ſeen a good deal of the world, and of the beſt company in it; as it is from thence ſhe has derived whatever knowledge ſhe poſſeſſes. You cannot, indeed, flatter her more, than by ſeeming to conſider her as fond of reading and retirement. But the truth is, nature formed her for the joys of ſociety, and ſhe is never ſo thoroughly pleaſed as when ſhe has a circle round her.

It is upon thoſe occaſions ſhe appears to full advantage; as I never knew any perſon who was endued with the talents for converſation to a higher degree. If I were diſpoſed to write the characters of the age, Timoclea is the firſt perſon in the world to whoſe aſſiſtance I ſhould apply. She has the happieſt art of marking out the diſtinguiſhing caſt of her acquaintance,

that

that I ever met with; and I have known her, in an afternoon's converſation, paint the manners with greater delicacy of judgment and ſtrength of coloring, than is to be found either in Theophraſtus or Bruyere.

She has an inexhauſtible fund of wit: but if I may venture to diſtinguiſh, where one knows not even how to define, I ſhould rather ſay, it is brilliant than ſtrong. This talent renders her the terror of all her female acquaintance; yet ſhe never ſacrificed the abſent, or mortified the preſent, merely for the ſake of diſplaying the force of her ſatire: if any feel its ſting, it is thoſe only who firſt provoke it. Still however it muſt be owned, that her reſentments are frequently without juſt foundation, and almoſt always beyond meaſure. But tho ſhe has much warmth, ſhe has great generoſity in her temper; and with all her faults ſhe is well worth your knowing.

And now, having given you this general plan of the ſtrength and weakneſs of the place, I leave you to make your approaches as you ſhall ſee proper. I am, &c.

LETTER LXIII.

To the ſame.

I LOOK upon verbal criticiſm, as it is generally exerciſed, to be no better than a ſort of learned legerdemain, by which the ſenſe or nonſenſe of a paſſage is artfully convey'd away, and ſome other introduced in its ſtead, as beſt ſuits with the purpoſe of the profound juggler. The diſſertation you recommended to my peruſal has but ſerved to confirm me in theſe ſentiments: for tho I admired the ingenuity of the artiſt, I could not but greatly ſuſpect the juſtneſs of an art, which can thus preſs any author into the ſervice of any hypotheſis.

I HAVE ſometimes amuſed myſelf with conſidering the entertainment it would afford to thoſe antients, whoſe works have had the honour to be attended by our commentators, could they riſe out of their ſepulchres, and peruſe ſome of thoſe curious conjectures, that have been raiſed upon their reſpective compoſitions. Were Horace, for inſtance, to read over only a few of thoſe numberleſs reſtorers of his text, and expoſitors of his

meaning, that have infeſted the republic of letters; what a fund of pleaſantry might he extract for a ſatire on critical erudition? how many harmleſs words would he ſee cruelly baniſhed from their rightful poſſeſſions, merely becauſe they happened to diſturb ſome unmerciful philologiſt? On the other hand, he would undoubtedly ſmile at that penetrating ſagacity, which has diſcovered meanings which never entered into his thoughts, and found out concealed alluſions in his moſt plain and artleſs expreſſions.

One could not, I think, ſet the general abſurdity of critical conjectures in a ſtronger light, than by applying them to ſomething parallel in our own writers. If the Engliſh tongue ſhould ever become a dead language, and our beſt authors be raiſed into the rank of claſſic writers; much of the force and propriety of their expreſſions, eſpecially of ſuch as turned upon humor, or alluded to any manners peculiar to the age, would inevitably be loſt, or, at beſt, would be extremely doubtful. How would it puzzle, for inſtance, future commentators to explain Swift's epigram upon our muſical conteſts?

I ima-

I imagine one might find them deſcanting upon that little humorous ſally of our Engliſh Rabelais, in ſome ſuch manner as this:

EPIGRAM *on the Feuds between* Handel *and* Bononcini.

Strange all this difference ſhould be
'Twixt Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee!

NOTES *of various Authors.*

" *Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee.*] I am " perſuaded the poet gave it *Twiddle drum* " and *Twiddle key*. To *twiddle* ſignifies to " make a certain ridiculous motion with " the fingers: what word therefore could " be more proper to expreſs this epigram- " writer's contempt of the performances of " thoſe muſicians, and of the folly of his " contemporaries in running into parties up- " on ſo abſurd an occaſion? The *drum* was " a certain martial inſtrument uſed in thoſe " times; as the word *key* is a technical term " in muſic, importing the fundamental " note which regulates the whole compo- " ſition. It means alſo thoſe little pieces " of wood which the fingers ſtrike againſt

" in an organ, &c. in order to make the in-
" ſtrument ſound. The alteration here
" propoſed is ſo *obvious* and *natural*, that I
" am ſurpriſed none of the commentators
" hit upon it before. *L. C. D.*

" *Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee.*] Theſe
" words have greatly embarraſs'd the cri-
" tics, who are extremely expert in finding
" a difficulty where there is none. Tweedle
" dum and Tweedle-dee are *moſt undoubted-*
" *ly* the name of the two muſicians: and
" tho they are ſtyled by different appel-
" lations in the title of this epigram, yet
" that is *no objection*, for it is well known
" that perſons in thoſe times had more ſur-
" names than one. *S. M.* Abſurd! here
" is evidently an error of the preſs, for there
" is not a ſingle hint in all antiquity of the
" family of the *Tweedle-dums* and *Tweedle-*
" *dees*. The learned *S. M.* therefore nod-
" ded when he undertook to explain this
" paſſage. The ſenſe will be very plain if
" we read with a ſmall alteration, *Whee-*
" *dle Tom* and *Waddle-THE*. *THE* be-
" ing a known contraction for Theodore,
" as Tom is for Thomas. *Waddle* and

" *Wheedle*

" *Wheedle* are likewiſe claſſical words.
" Thus Pope:

" *As when a dab-chick* waddles *thro the copſe.*
Dun. ii. 59.

" *Obliquely* waddling *to the mark in view.*
Ib. ii. 150.

" And tho indeed I do not recollect to
" have met with the verb *to wheedle*, in
" any pure author, yet it is *plain* that it was
" in uſe, ſince we find the participle *wheed-*
" *ling* in an antient tragedy compoſed about
" theſe times:

" *A laughing, toying*, wheedling, *whimp'ring*
" *ſhe*
" *Will make him amble on a goſſip's meſſage,*
" *And hold the diſtaff with a hand as patient*
" *As e'er did Hercules.* JANE SHORE.

" *Thomas* and *Theodore* therefore were *moſt*
" *certainly* the Chriſtian names of theſe two
" muſicians, to the contractions of which
" the words *wheedle* and *waddle* are added
" as characteriſtical of the perſons and diſ-
" poſitions of the men: the former imply-
" ing that *Tom* was a mean ſycophant, and

"the latter that *THE* had an awkward "and ridiculous gait." *F. J. Z.*

I KNOW not, Orontes, how I ſhall eſcape your ſatire, for venturing to be thus free with a ſcience which is ſometimes, I think, admitted into a ſhare of your meditations: yet, tell me honeſtly, is not this a faithful ſpecimen of the ſpirit and talents of the *general* claſs of critic-writers? Far am I, however, from thinking irreverently of thoſe uſeful members of the republic of letters, who with modeſty and proper diffidence have offered their aſſiſtance in throwing a light upon obſcure paſſages in antient authors. Even when this ſpirit breaks out in its higheſt pride and petulance of reformation, if it confines itſelf to claſſical enquiries, I can be contented with treating it only as an object of ridicule. But, I muſt confeſs, when I find it, with an aſſured and confident air, ſupporting religious or political doctrines upon the very uncertain foundation of various readings, forced analogies, and precarious conjectures, it is not without ſome difficulty I can ſuppreſs my indignation. Farewel. I am, &c.

LETTER LXIV.

To PHILOTES.

Tunbridge, Aug. 4

I THINK I promiſed you a letter from this place: yet I have nothing more material to write than that I got ſafe hither. To any other man I ſhould make an apology for troubling him with an information ſo trivial; but among true friends there is nothing indifferent, and what would ſeem of no conſequence to others, has in intercourſes of this nature its weight and value. A by-ſtander, unacquainted with play, may fancy perhaps, that the counters are of no more worth than they appear; but thoſe who are engaged in the game, know they are to be conſidered at a higher rate. You ſee I draw my alluſions from the ſcene before me: a propriety which the critics, I think, upon ſome occaſions recommend.

I HAVE often wondered what odd whim could firſt induce the healthy to follow the ſick into places of this ſort, and lay the ſcene of their diverſions amidſt the moſt wretched part of our ſpecies: one ſhould imagine

an hoſpital the laſt ſpot in the world, to which thoſe who are in purſuit of pleaſure would think of reſorting. However ſo it is, and by this means the company here furniſh out a tragi-comedy of the moſt ſingular kind. While ſome are literally dying, others are expiring in metaphor; and in one ſcene you are preſented with the real, and in another with the fantaſtical pains of mankind. An ignorant ſpectator might be apt to ſuſpect, that each party was endeavoring to qualify itſelf for acting in the oppoſite character: for the infirm cannot labor more earneſtly to recover the ſtrength they have loſt, than the robuſt to diſſipate that which they poſſeſs. Thus the diſeaſed paſs not more anxious nights in their beds, than the healthy at the hazard-tables; and I frequently ſee a game at quadrille occaſion as ſevere diſquietudes as a fit of the gout. As for myſelf, I perform a ſort of middle part in this motly drama, and am ſometimes diſpoſed to join with the invalids in envying the healthy, and ſometimes have ſpirits enough to mix with the gay in pitying the ſplenetic.

THE truth is, I have found ſome benefit by the waters; but I ſhall not be ſo ſanguine as to pronounce with certainty of their effects, till I ſee how they enable me to paſs thro the approaching winter. That ſeaſon, you know, is the time of trial with me; and if I get over the next with more eaſe than the laſt, I ſhall think myſelf obliged to celebrate the nymph of theſe ſprings in grateful ſonnet.

BUT let times and ſeaſons operate as they may, there is no part of me over which they will have no power; and in all the changes of this uncertain conſtitution, my heart will ever continue fixed and firmly yours. I am, &c.

LETTER LXV.

To ORONTES.

May 6, 1735.

LET others conſider you for thoſe ample poſſeſſions you enjoy: ſuffer me to ſay, that it is your application of them alone which renders either them or you valuable in my eſtimation. Your ſplendid roofs and elegant accommodations I can view

view without the leaſt emotion of envy: but when I obſerve you in the full power of exerting the noble purpoſes of your exalted generoſity—it is then, I confeſs, I am apt to reflect, with ſome regret, on the humbler ſupplies of my own more limited finances. *Nihil habet* (to ſpeak of you in the ſame language that the firſt of orators addreſſed the greateſt of emperors) *fortuna tua majus, quàm ut poſſis; nec natura melius, quàm ut velis ſervare quamplurimos.* To be able to ſoften the calamities of mankind, and inſpire gladneſs into a heart oppreſſed with want, is indeed the nobleſt privilege of an enlarged fortune: but to exerciſe that privilege in all its generous refinements, is an inſtance of the moſt uncommon elegance both of temper and underſtanding.

In the ordinary diſpenſations of bounty, little addreſs is required: but when it is to be applied to thoſe of a ſuperior rank and more elevated mind, there is as much charity diſcovered in the *manner* as in the meaſure of one's benevolence. It is ſomething extremely mortifying to a well-formed ſpirit, to ſee itſelf conſidered as an object of compaſſion;

compaſſion; as it is the part of improved humanity to humor this honeſt pride in our nature, and to relieve the neceſſities without offending the delicacy of the diſtreſſed.

I HAVE ſeen charity (if charity it might be called) inſult with an air of pity, and wound at the ſame time that it healed. But I have ſeen too the higheſt munificence diſpenſed with the moſt refined tenderneſs, and a bounty conferred with as much addreſs as the moſt artful would employ in ſoliciting one. Suffer me, Orontes, upon this ſingle occaſion, to gratify my own inclinations in violence to yours, by pointing out the particular inſtance I have in my view; and allow me, at the ſame time, to join my acknowledgments, with thoſe of the unfortunate perſon I recommend to your protection, for the generous aſſiſtance you lately afforded him. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXVI.

To CLEORA.

Sept. 5, 1737.

SHALL I own to you that I cannot repent of an offence which occaſioned ſo agreable a reproof? A cenſure conveyed in ſuch genteel terms, charms more than corrects, and tempts rather than reforms. I am ſure at leaſt, tho I ſhould regret the crime, I ſhall always admire the rebuke, and long to kiſs the hand that chaſteneth in ſo pleaſing a manner. However, I ſhall for the future ſtrictly purſue your orders, and have ſent you in this ſecond parcel no other books than what my own library ſupplied. Among theſe you will find a collection of letters: I do not recommend them to you, having never read them; nor indeed am I acquainted with their characters; but they preſented themſelves to my hands as I was tumbling over ſome others: ſo I threw them in with the reſt, and gave them a chance of adding to your amuſement. I wiſh I could meet with any thing that had

even

even the leaſt probability of contributing to mine. But,

- forlorne of thee,
Whither ſhall I betake me, where ſubſiſt?
MILT.

Time, that reconciles one to moſt things, has not been able to render your abſence in any degree leſs uneaſy to me. I may rather be ſaid to haunt the houſe in which I live, than to make one of the family. I walk in and out of the rooms like a reſtleſs ſpirit: for I never ſpeak till I am ſpoken to, and then generally anſwer, like Banco's ghoſt in Macbeth, with a deep ſigh and a nod. Thus abſtracted from every thing about me, I am yet quite ruined for a hermit, and find no more ſatisfaction in retirement, than you do in the company of ***.

How often do I wiſh myſelf in poſſeſſion of that famous ring you were mentioning the other day, which had the property of rendering thoſe who wore it inviſible. I would rather be maſter of this wonderful *unique*, than of the kingdom which Gyges gained by means of it; as I might then attend you, like your guardian angel, without

out cenſure or obſtruction. How agreable would it be to break out upon you, like Æneas from his cloud, where you leaſt expected me; and join again the dear companion of my fortunes, in ſpight of that relentleſs power who has raiſed ſo many cruel ſtorms to deſtroy us! But whilſt I employed this extraordinary ring to theſe and a thouſand other pleaſing purpoſes, you would have nothing to apprehend from my being inveſted with ſuch an inviſible faculty. That innocence which guards and adorns my Cleora in her moſt gay and public hours, attends her, I well know, in her moſt private and retired ones; and ſhe who always acts as under the eye of the beſt of beings, has nothing to fear from the ſecret inſpection of any mortal. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER LXVII.

To EUPHRONIUS.

May 5, 1743.

IF you received the firſt account of my loſs from other hands than mine; you muſt impute it to the dejection of mind into which that accident threw me. The blow, indeed, fell with too much ſeverity, to leave me capable of recollecting myſelf enough to write to you immediately; as there cannot, perhaps, be a greater ſhock to a breaſt of any ſenſibility, than to ſee its earlieſt and moſt valuable connexions irreparably broken; than to find itſelf for ever torn from the firſt and moſt endeared object of its higheſt veneration. At leaſt, the affection and eſteem I bore to that excellent parent were founded upon ſo many and ſuch uncommon motives, that his death has given me occaſion to lament not only a moſt ender father, but a moſt valuable friend.

THAT I can no longer enjoy the benefit of his animating example, is one among the many aggravating circumſtances of my affliction;

fliction; and I often apply to myſelf, what an excellent antient has ſaid upon a ſimilar occaſion, *Vereor ne nunc negligentius vivam.* There is nothing, in truth, puts us ſo much upon our guard, as to act under the conſtant inſpection of one, whoſe virtues, as well as years, have rendered venerable. Never, indeed, did the dignity of goodneſs appear more irreſiſtible in any man: Yet there was ſomething at the ſame time ſo gentle in his manners, ſuch an innocency and chearfulneſs in his converſation, that he was as ſure to gain affection as to inſpire reverence.

It has been obſerved (and I think, by Cowley) "That a man in much buſineſs "muſt either make himſelf a knave, or "the world will make him a fool." If there is any truth in this obſervation, it is not, however, without an exception. My father was early engaged in the great ſcenes of buſineſs, where he continued almoſt to his very laſt hour; yet he preſerved his integrity firm and unbroken, thro all thoſe powerful aſſaults he muſt neceſſarily have encountered in ſo long a courſe of action.

If

If it were juſtice, indeed, to his other virtues, to ſingle out any particular one as ſhining with ſuperior luſtre to the reſt, I ſhould point to his probity as the brighteſt part of his character. But the truth is, the whole tenor of his conduct was one uniform exerciſe of every moral quality that can adorn and exalt human nature. To defend the injured, to relieve the indigent, to protect the diſtreſſed, was the chief end and aim of all his endeavors; and his principal motive both for engaging and perſevering in his profeſſion was, to enable himſelf more abundantly to gratify ſo glorious an ambition.

No man had a higher reliſh of the pleaſures of retired and contemplative life; as none was more qualified to enter into thoſe calm ſcenes with greater eaſe and dignity. He had nothing to make him deſirous of flying from the reflections of his own mind, nor any paſſions which his moderate patrimony would not have been more than ſufficient to have gratified. But to live for himſelf only, was not conſiſtent with his generous and enlarged ſentiments. It was a ſpirit of benevolence that led him into the

active ſcenes of the world; which upon any other principle he would either never have entered, or ſoon have renounced. And it was that godlike ſpirit, which conducted and ſupported him thro his uſeful progreſs, to the honor and intereſt of his family and friends, and to the benefit of every creature, that could poſſibly be comprehended within the extenſive circle of his beneficence.

I WELL know, my dear Euphronius, the high regard you pay to every character of merit in general, and the eſteem in which you held this moſt valuable man in particular. I am ſure, therefore, you would not forgive me were I to make an apology for leaving with you this private monument of my veneration for a parent, whoſe leaſt and loweſt claim to my gratitude and eſteem is, that I am indebted to him for my birth. Adieu. I am, &c.

LET-

LETTER LXVIII.

To PHILOTES.

I AM particularly pleaſed with a paſſage in Homer, wherein Jupiter is repreſented as taking off his eyes, with a ſort of ſatiety, from the horror of the field of battle, and relieving himſelf with a view of the Hippomolgi; a people famous, it ſeems, for their innocence and ſimplicity of manners. It is in order to practiſe the ſame kind of experiment, and give my ſelf a ſhort remiſſion from that ſcene of turbulence and contention in which I am engaged, that I now turn my thoughts on you, Philotes, whoſe temperance and moderation may well juſtify me in calling you a modern Hippomolgian.

I FORGET which of the antients it is, that recommends this method of thinking over the virtues of one's acquaintance: but I am ſure it is ſometimes neceſſary to do ſo, in order to keep one's ſelf in humor with our ſpecies, and preſerve the ſpirit of philanthropy from being entirely extinguiſhed. Thoſe who frequent the ambitious walks of life, are apt to take their eſtimate of man-

kind from the ſmall part of it that lies before them, and conſider the reſt of the world as practiſing, in different and under-parts, the ſame treachery and diſſimulation which marks out the characters of their ſuperiors. It is difficult indeed to preſerve the mind from falling into a general contempt of our race, whilſt one is converſant with the worſt part of it. I labor, however, as much as poſſible, to guard againſt that ungenerous diſpoſition; as nothing is ſo apt to kill thoſe ſeeds of benevolence which every man ſhould endeavour to cultivate in his breaſt.

Ill ſurely, therefore, have thoſe wits employed their talents, who have made our ſpecies the object of their ſatire, and affected to ſubdue the vanity, by derogating from the virtues, of the human heart. But it will be found, I believe, upon an impartial examination, that there is more folly than malice in our natures, and that mankind oftner act wrong through ignorance than deſign. Perhaps the true meaſure of human merit is neither to be taken from the hiſtories of former times, nor from what paſſes in the more ſtriking ſcenes of the preſent generation. The greateſt virtues have, probably,

been

been ever the moſt obſcure; and, I am perſuaded, in all ages of the world more genuine heroiſm has been overlooked and unknown, than either recorded or obſerved. That *aliquid divinum*, as Tully calls it, that celeſtial ſpark which every man, who coolly contemplates his own mind, may diſcover within him, operates where we leaſt look for it, and often raiſes the nobleſt productions of virtue in the ſhade and obſcurity of life.

But it is time to quit ſpeculation for action, and return to the common affairs of the world. I ſhall certainly do ſo with more advantage, by keeping Philotes ſtill in my view; as I ſhall enter into the intereſts of mankind with more alacrity, by thus conſidering the virtues of his honeſt heart as leſs ſingular than I am ſometimes inclined to ſuppoſe. Adieu. I am, &c.

LETTER LXIX.

To the ſame.

Aug. 3, 1735.

LET it not be any diſcouragement to you, Philotes, that you have hitherto received but little ſatisfaction from thoſe noble ſpeculations wherein you are employed. "Truth (to uſe the expreſſion of the excellent Mr. Wollaſton) "is the offſpring "of unbroken meditations, and of thoughts "often reviſed and corrected." It requires indeed great patience and reſolution to diſſipate that cloud of darkneſs which ſurrounds her; or (if you will allow me to go to an old philoſopher for my alluſion) to draw her up from that profound well in which ſhe lies concealed.

THERE is, however, ſuch a general connexion in the operations of nature, that the diſcovery even of a ſingle truth opens the way to numberleſs others; and when once the mind has hit upon a right ſcent, ſhe cannot wholly purſue her enquiries in vain;

Canes

Canes ut montivagæ perſæpe feraï
Naribus inveniunt intectas frunde quietes,
Cum ſemel inſtiterunt veſtigia certa viaï:
Sic aliud ex alio per te tute ipſe videre
— in rebus poteris, cæcaſque latebras
Inſinuare omnes, et verum protrahere inde.

LUCRET.

IT muſt be owned nevertheleſs, that, after having exerted all our ſagacity and induſtry, we ſhall ſcarce arrive at certainty in many ſpeculative truths. Providence does not ſeem to have intended that we ſhould ever be in poſſeſſion of *demonſtrative* knowledge, beyond a very limited compaſs; tho at the ſame time it cannot be ſuppoſed, without the higheſt injuſtice to the benevolent Author of our natures, that he has left any *neceſſary* truths without evident notes of diſtinction. But while the powers of the mind are thus limited in their extent, and greatly fallible likewiſe in their operations, is it not amazing, Philotes, that mankind ſhould inſult each other for difference in opinion, and treat every notion that oppoſes their own, with obloquy and contempt? Is it not amazing that a creature with

talents ſo precarious and circumſcribed, ſhould uſurp that confidence which can only belong to much ſuperior beings, and claim a deference which is due to perfection alone? Surely the greateſt arrogance that ever entered into the human heart, is that which not only pretends to be poſitive itſelf in points wherein the beſt and wiſeſt have diſagreed, but looks down with all the inſolent ſuperiority of contemptuous pity on thoſe whoſe impartial reaſonings have led them into oppoſite concluſions.

THERE is nothing, perhaps, more evident than that our intellectual faculties are not formed by one general ſtandard; and conſequently that diverſity of opinion is of the very eſſence of our natures. It ſeems probable that this diſparity extends even to our ſenſitive powers; and tho we agree indeed in giving the ſame names to certain viſible appearances, as whiteneſs, for inſtance, to ſnow; yet it is by no means demonſtration, that the particular body which affects us with that ſenſation, raiſes the ſame preciſe idea in any two perſons who ſhall happen to contemplate it together. Thus I have often heard you mention your youngeſt daughter

as

as being the exact counter-part of her mother: now ſhe does not appear to me to reſemble her in any ſingle feature. To what can this diſagreement in our judgments be owing, but to a difference in the ſtructure of our organs of ſight; yet as juſtly, Philotes, might you diſclaim me for your friend, and look upon me with contempt for not diſcovering a ſimilitude which appears ſo evident to your eyes; as any man can abuſe or deſpiſe another for not apprehending the force of that argument which carries conviction to his own underſtanding.

HAPPY had it been for the peace of the world, if our maintainers of ſyſtems either in religion or politics, had conducted their ſeveral debates with the full impreſſion of this truth upon their minds. Genuine philoſophy is ever, indeed, the leaſt dogmatical; and I am always inclined to ſuſpect the force of that argument which is obtruded with arrogance and ſufficiency.

I AM wonderfully pleaſed with a paſſage I met with the other day in the preface to Mr. Boyle's Philoſophical eſſays, and would recommend that cautions ſpirit, by which he profeſſes to have conducted himſelf in his

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his

his phyſical reſearches, as worthy the imitation of enquirers after truth of every kind.

" PERHAPS you will wonder, ſays he, " that in almoſt every one of the following " eſſays, I ſhould uſe ſo often, *perhaps*, *it* " *ſeems*, *'tis not improbable*, as argue a dif- " fidence of the truth of the opinions I in- " cline to; and that I ſhould be ſo ſhy of " laying down principles, and ſometimes " of ſo much as venturing at explications. " But I muſt freely confeſs, that having " met with many things of which I could " give myſelf no one probable cauſe, and " ſome things of which ſeveral cauſes may " be aſſigned ſo differing, as not to agree in " any thing, unleſs in their being all of " them probable enough; I have often " found ſuch difficulties in ſearching into " the cauſes and manner of things, and I " am ſo ſenſible of my own diſability to " ſurmount thoſe difficulties, that I dare " ſpeak confidently and poſitively of very " few things, except matter of fact. And " when I venture to deliver any thing by " way of opinion, I ſhould, if it were not " for mere ſhame, ſpeak yet more diffi-

" dently

" dently than I have been wont to do. Nor,
" have my thoughts been altogether idle—
" in forming notions and attempting to de-
" viſe hypotheſes. But I have hitherto (tho
" not always, yet not unfrequently) found
" that what pleaſed me for a while, was
" ſoon after diſgraced by ſome farther or
" new experiment. And, indeed, I have
" the leſs envied many (for I ſay not *all)*
" of thoſe writers who have taken upon
" them to deliver the cauſes of things, and
" explicate the myſteries of nature, ſince I
" have had opportunity to obſerve how
" many of their doctrines, after having
" been for a while applauded and even ad-
" mired, have afterwards been confuted by
" ſome new phænomenon in nature, which
" was either unknown to ſuch writers, or
" not ſufficiently conſidered by them."

If poſitiveneſs could become any man in any point of mere ſpeculation, it muſt have been this truly noble philoſopher when he was delivering the reſult of his ſtudies in a ſcience, wherein, by the united confeſſion of the whole world, he ſo eminently excelled. But he had too much generoſity to preſcribe his own notions as a meaſure to the

the judgment of others, and too much good ſenſe to aſſert them with heat or confidence.

WHOEVER, Philotes, purſues his ſpeculations with this humble unarrogating temper of mind, and with the beſt exertion of thoſe faculties which Providence has aſſigned him, tho he ſhould not find the conviction, never, ſurely, can he fail of the reward of truth. I am, &c.

LETTER LXX.

To PALAMEDES.

IF malice had never broke looſe upon the world, till it ſeized your reputation, I might reaſonably condole with you on falling the firſt prey to its unreſtrained rage. But this ſpectre has haunted merit almoſt from its earlieſt exiſtence: and when all mankind were as yet included within a ſingle family, one of them, we know, roſe up in malignity of ſoul againſt his innocent brother. Virtue, it ſhould ſeem therefore, has now been too long acquainted with this her conſtant perſecutor, to be either terrified

or dejected at an appearance ſo common. The truth of it is, ſhe muſt either renounce her nobleſt theatre of action, and ſeclude herſelf in cells and deſarts, or be contented to enter upon the ſtage of the world with this fiend in her train. She cannot triumph, if ſhe will not be traduced; and ſhe ſhould conſider the clamors of cenſure, when joined with her own conſcious applauſe, as ſo many acclamations that confirm her victory.

Let thoſe who harbor this worſt of human diſpoſitions, conſider the many wretched and contemptible circumſtances which attend it: but it is the buſineſs of him who unjuſtly ſuffers from it, to reflect how it may be turned to his advantage. Remember then, my friend, that Generoſity would loſe half her dignity, if malice did not contribute to her elevation; and he that has never been injured, has never had it in his power to exerciſe the nobleſt privilege of heroic virtue. There is another conſolation which may be derived from the rancor of the world, as it will inſtruct one in a piece of knowledge of the moſt ſingular benefit in our progreſs thro it: It will teach us to

diſtinguiſh

diſtinguiſh genuine friendſhip from counterfeit. For he only who is warmed with the real flame of amity, will riſe up to ſupport his ſingle negative, in oppoſition to the clamorous votes of an undiſtinguiſhing multitude.

He indeed, who can ſee a cool and deliberate injury done to his friend, without feeling himſelf wounded in his moſt ſenſible part; has never known the force of the moſt generous of all the human affections. Every man who has not taken the ſacred name of friendſhip in vain, will ſubſcribe to thoſe ſentiments which Homer puts into the mouth of Achilles, and which Mr. Pope has opened and enlarged with ſuch inimitable ſtrength and ſpirit:

A gen'rous friendſhip no cold medium knows,
Burns with one love, with one reſentment glows;
One ſhould our int'reſts and our paſſions be:
My friend muſt hate the man that injures me.
ix. 609.

It may greatly alſo allay the pain which attends the wounds of defamation, and which are always moſt ſeverely felt by thoſe who

leaſt deſerve them; to reflect, that tho malice generally flings the firſt ſtone, it is folly and ignorance, it is indolence or irreſolution, which are principally concerned in ſwelling the heap. When the tide of cenſure runs ſtrongly againſt any particular character, the generality of mankind are too careleſs or too impotent to withſtand the current; and thus, without any particular malice in their own natures, are often indolently carried along with others, by tamely falling in with the general ſtream. The number of thoſe who really mean one harm, will wonderfully leſſen after the deductions which may fairly be made of this ſort: and the cup of unjuſt reproach muſt ſurely loſe much of its bitterneſs, where one is perſuaded that malevolence has the leaſt ſhare in mingling the draught. For nothing, perhaps, ſtings a generous mind more ſenſibly in wrongs of this ſort, than to conſider them as evidences of a general malignity in human nature. But from whatever cauſes theſe ſtorms may ariſe, Virtue would not be true to her own native privileges, if ſhe ſuffered herſelf to ſink under them. It is from that ſtrength and firmneſs

neſs which upright intentions will ever ſecure to an honeſt mind, that Palamedes, I am perſuaded, will ſtand ſuperior to thoſe unmerited reproaches which aſſault his character, and preſerve an unbroken repoſe amidſt the little noiſe and ſtrife of ignorant or malicious tongues. Farewel. I am, &c.

LETTER LXXI.

To PHILOTES.

April 9, 1740.

THERE is no advantage which attends a popular genius that I am ſo much inclined to envy, as the privilege of rendering merit conſpicuous. An author who has raiſed the attention of the public to his productions, and gained a whole nation for his audience, may be conſidered as guardian of the temple of Fame, and inveſted with the prerogative of giving entrance to whomſoever he deems worthy of that glorious diſtinction. But the praiſe of an ordinary writer obſtructs rather than advances the honor due to merit, and ſullies the luſtre it means to celebrate. Impotent

panegyric

panegyric operates like a blight wherever it falls, and injures all that it touches. Accordingly, Henry the IV. of France was wont humorouſly to aſcribe his early grey hairs to the effect of numberleſs wretched compliments, which were paid him by a certain ridiculous orator of his times. But tho the wreathes of folly ſhould not diſgrace the temple they ſurround; they wither, at leaſt, as ſoon as received: and if they ſhould not be offenſive, moſt certainly, however, they will be tranſient. Whereas thoſe, on the contrary, with which an Horace or a Boileau, an Addiſon or a Pope, have crowned the virtues of their contemporaries, are as permanent as they are illuſtrious, and will preſerve their colors and fragrance to remoteſt ages.

If I could thus weave the garlands of unfading applauſe; if I were in the number of thoſe choſen ſpirits whoſe approbation is fame, your friend ſhould not want that diſtinguiſhing tribute which his virtues deſerve, and you requeſt. I would tell the world (and tell it in a voice that ſhould be heard far and remembered long) that Euſebes, with all the knowledge and experience

of theſe later ages, has all the innocence and ſimplicity of the earlieſt: that he enforces the doctrines of his ſacred function, not with the vain pomp of oſtentatious eloquence, but with the far more powerful perſuaſion of active and exemplary virtue: that he ſoftens the ſeverity of precept with the eaſe and familiarity of converſation, and by generouſly mingling with the meaneſt committed to his care, inſinuates the inſtructor under the air of the companion: that whilſt he thus fills up the circle of his private ſtation, he ſtill turns his regards to the public, and employs his genius, his induſtry, and his fortune in proſecuting and perfecting thoſe diſcoveries, which tend moſt to the general benefit of mankind: in a word, that whilſt others of his order are contending for the ambitious prizes of eccleſiaſtical dignities, it is his glorious prehemineence to merit the higheſt, without enjoying or ſoliciting even the loweſt. This, and yet more than this, the world ſhould hear of your friend, if the world were inclined to liſten to my voice. But tho you perhaps, Philotes, may be willing to give audience to my Muſe,

namque

namque Tu ſolebas
Meas eſſe aliquid putare nugas. CATUL.

can ſhe hope to find favor likewiſe in the ſight of the public? Let me then, rather content myſelf with the ſilent admiration of thoſe virtues, which I am not worthy to celebrate; and leave it to others to place the good works of Euſebes where they may *ſhine forth before men.* I am, &c.

LETTER LXXII.

To the ſame.

Dec. 7, 1737.

THE viſits of a friend, like thoſe of the ſun at this ſeaſon, are extremely enlivening. I am ſure at leaſt they would both be particularly acceptable to me at preſent, when my mind is as much overcaſt as the heavens. I hope, therefore, you will not drop the deſign your letter intimates, of ſpending a few days with me in your way to ***. Your company will greatly contribute to diſperſe thoſe clouds of melancholy which the loſs of a very valuable friend has

hung over me. There is ſomething, indeed, in the firſt moments of ſeparation from thoſe, whom a daily commerce and long habitude of friendſhip has grafted upon the heart, that diſorders our whole frame of thought, and diſcolors all one's enjoyments. Let Philoſophy aſſiſt with the utmoſt of her vaunted ſtrength, the mind cannot immediately recover the firmneſs of its poſture, when thoſe amicable props upon which it uſed to reſt, are totally removed. Even the moſt indifferent objects with which we have long been familiar, take ſome kind of root in our hearts; and "I ſhould hardly "care (as a celebrated author has, with great good-nature, obſerved) "to have an "old poſt pulled up, which I remember'd "ever ſince I was a child."

To know how to receive the full ſatisfaction of a preſent enjoyment, with a diſpoſition prepared at the ſame time to yield it up without reluctance, is hardly, I doubt, reconcileable to humanity: pain in being diſunited from thoſe we love, is a tax we muſt be contented to pay, if we would enjoy the pleaſures of the ſocial affections. One would not wiſh, indeed, to be wholly

ly inſenſible to diſquietudes of this kind; and we muſt renounce the moſt refined reliſh of our being, if we would upon all occaſions poſſeſs our ſouls in a Stoical tranquillity.

THAT antient philoſopher whoſe precept it was, to converſe with our friends as if they might one day prove our enemies, has been juſtly cenſured as advancing a very ungenerous maxim. To remember, however, that we muſt one day moſt certainly be divided from them, is a reflection, methinks, that ſhould enter with us into our tender connections of every kind. From the preſent diſcompoſure, therefore, of my own breaſt, and from that ſhare which I take in whatever may affect the repoſe of yours, I cannot bid you adieu, without reminding you at the ſame time of the uſeful caution of one of your poetical acquaintance:

Quicquid amas, cupias non placuiſſe nimis.

I am, &c.

LETTER LXXIII.

To PALAMEDES.

Feb. 13, 1741.

IF one would rate any particular merit according to its true valuation, it may be neceſſary, perhaps, to conſider how far it can be juſtly claimed by mankind in general. I am ſure at leaſt, when I read the very uncommon ſentiments of your laſt letter, I found their judicious author riſe in my eſteem, by reflecting, that there is not a more ſingular character in the world, than that of a thinking man. It is not merely having a ſucceſſion of ideas, which lightly ſkim over the mind, that can with any propriety be ſtyled by that denomination. It is obſerving them ſeparately and diſtinctly, and ranging them under their reſpective claſſes; it is calmly and ſteddily viewing our opinions on every ſide, and reſolutely tracing them thro all their conſequences and connexions, that conſtitutes the man of reflexion, and diſtinguiſhes reaſon from fancy. Providence, indeed, does not ſeem to have formed any very conſiderable number of

of our ſpecies for an extenſive exerciſe of this higher faculty; as the thoughts of the far greater part of mankind are neceſſarily reſtrained within the ordinary purpoſes of animal life. But even if we look up to thoſe who move in much ſuperior orbits, and who have opportunities to improve, as well as leiſure to exerciſe their underſtandings; we ſhall find, that thinking is one of the laſt exerted privileges of cultivated humanity.

It is, indeed, an operation of the mind which meets with many obſtructions to check its juſt and free direction; but there are two principles which prevail more or leſs in the conſtitutions of moſt men, that particularly contribute to keep this faculty of the ſoul unemployed: I mean pride and indolence. To deſcend to truth thro the tedious progreſſion of well-examined deductions, is conſidered as a reproach to the quickneſs of underſtanding; as it is much too laborious a method for any but thoſe who are poſſeſſed of a vigorous and reſolute activity of mind. For this reaſon the greater part of our ſpecies generally chooſe either to ſeize upon their concluſions at once, or

to take them by rebound from others, as beſt ſuiting with their vanity or their lazineſs. Accordingly Mr. Locke obſerves, that there are not ſo many errors and wrong opinions in the world, as is generally imagined. Not that he thinks mankind are by any means uniform in embracing truth; but becauſe the majority of them, he maintains, have no thought or opinion at all about thoſe doctrines concerning which they raiſe the greateſt clamor. Like the common ſoldiers in an army, they follow where their leaders direct, without knowing, or even enquiring, into the cauſe for which they ſo warmly contend.

THIS will account for the ſlow ſteps by which truth has advanced in the world, on one ſide; and for thoſe abſurd ſyſtems which, at different periods, have had an univerſal currency on the other. For there is a ſtrange diſpoſition in human nature, either blindly to tread the ſame paths that have been traverſed by others, or to ſtrike out into the moſt devious extravagancies: the greater part of the world will either totally renounce their reaſon, or reaſon only

from the wild ſuggeſtions of an heated imagination.

From the ſame ſource may be derived thoſe diviſions and animoſities which break the union both of publick and private ſocieties, and turn the peace and harmony of human intercourſe into diſſonance and contention. For while men judge and act by ſuch meaſures as have not been proved by the ſtandard of diſpaſſionate reaſon, they muſt equally be miſtaken in their eſtimates both of their own conduct and that of others.

If we turn our view from active to contemplative life, we may have occaſion, perhaps, to remark, that thinking is no leſs uncommon in the literary than the civil world. The number of thoſe writers who can with any juſtneſs of expreſſion be termed thinking authors, would not form a very copious library, tho one were to take in all of that kind which both antient and modern times have produced. Neceſſarily, I imagine, muſt one exclude from a collection of this ſort, all critics, commentators, modern Latin poets, tranſlators, and, in ſhort, all that numerous under-tribe in the commonwealth

monwealth of literature that owe their exiſtence merely to the thoughts of others. I ſhould reject for the ſame reaſon ſuch compilers as Valerius Maximus and Aulus Gellius: tho, it muſt be owned indeed, their works have acquired an accidental value, as they preſerve to us ſeveral curious traces of antiquity, which time would otherwiſe have entirely worn out. Thoſe teeming geniuſes likewiſe, who have propagated the fruits of their ſtudies thro a long ſeries of tracts, would have little pretence, I believe, to be admitted as writers of reflection. For this reaſon I cannot regret the loſs of thoſe incredible numbers of compoſitions which ſome of the antients are ſaid to have produced:

Quale fuit Caſſi rapido ferventius amni
Ingenium; capſis quem fama eſt eſſe, libriſque
Ambuſtum propriis. HOR.

Thus Epicurus, we are told, left behind him three hundred volumes of his own works, wherein he had not inſerted a ſingle quotation; and we have it upon the authority of Varro's own words [a], that he him-

[a] This paſſage is to be found in Aul. Gellius, who quotes it from a treatiſe which Varro had written conſelf

ſelf compoſed four hundred and ninety books. Seneca aſſures us, that Didymus the grammarian wrote no leſs than four thouſand; but Origen, it ſeems, was yet more prolific, and extended his performances even to ſix thouſand treatiſes. It is obvious to imagine with what ſort of materials the productions of ſuch expeditious workmen were wrought up: ſound thought and well-matured reflections could have no ſhare, we may be ſure, in theſe haſty performances. Thus are books multiplied, whilſt authors are ſcarce; and ſo much eaſier is it to write than to think! But ſhall I not myſelf, Palemedes, prove an inſtance that it is ſo, if I ſuſpend any longer your own more important reflections, by interrupting you with ſuch as mine? Adieu. I am, &c.

cerning the wonderful effects of the number Seven. But the ſubject of this piece cannot be more ridiculous than the ſtyle in which it appears to have been compoſed: for that moſt learned author of his times (as Cicero, if I miſtake not, ſomewhere calls him) informed his readers in that performance, *ſe jam duodecimam annorum hebdomadam ingreſſum eſſe, et ad eum diem ſeptuaginta hebdomadas librorum conſcripſiſſe.* Aul. Gell. iii. 10.

LET-

LETTER LXXIV.

To ORONTES.

IT is with much pleaſure I look back upon that philoſophical week which I lately enjoyed at ***; as there is no part, perhaps, of ſocial life, which affords more real ſatisfaction, than thoſe hours which one paſſes in rational and unreſerved converſation. The free communication of ſentiments amongſt a ſet of ingenious and ſpeculative friends, ſuch as thoſe you gave me the opportunity of meeting, throws the mind into the moſt advantageous exerciſe, and ſhews the ſtrength or weakneſs of its opinions with greater force of conviction, than any other method we can employ.

THAT *it is not good for man to be alone*, is true in more views of our ſpecies than one; and ſociety gives ſtrength to our reaſon, as well as poliſh to our manners. The ſoul, when left entirely to her own ſolitary contemplations, is inſenſibly drawn by a ſort of conſtitutional bias, which generally leads her opinions to the ſide of her inclinations. Hence it is that ſhe contracts thoſe peculiarities

rities of reaſoning, and little *habits* of thinking, which ſo often confirm her in the moſt fantaſtical errors. But nothing is more likely to recover the mind from this falſe bent, than the counter-warmth of impartial debate. Converſation opens our views, and gives our faculties a more vigorous play; it puts us upon turning our notions on every ſide, and holds them up to a light that diſcovers thoſe latent flaws, which would probably have lain concealed in the gloom of unagitated abſtraction. Accordingly one may remark, that moſt of thoſe wild doctrines, which have been let looſe upon the world, have generally owed their birth to perſons, whoſe circumſtances or diſpoſitions have given them the feweſt opportunities of canvaſſing their reſpective ſyſtems, in the way of free and friendly debate. Had the authors of many an extravagant hypotheſis diſcuſſed their principles in private circles, ere they had given vent to them in public: the obſervation of Varro had never, perhaps, been made (or never at leaſt with ſo much juſtice) that "there is no "opinion ſo abſurd, but has ſome philoſo-"pher or other to produce in its ſupport."

UPON

Upon this principle, I imagine, it is, that ſome of the fineſt pieces of antiquity are written in the dialogue-manner. Plato and Tully, it ſhould ſeem, thought truth could never be examined with more advantage, than amidſt the amicable oppoſition of well-regulated converſe. It is probable, indeed, that ſubjects of a ſerious and philoſophical kind were more frequently the topics of Greek and Roman converſations, than they are of ours; as the circumſtances of the world had not yet given occaſion to thoſe prudential reaſons which may now, perhaps, reſtrain a more free exchange of ſentiments amongſt us. There was ſomething, likewiſe, in the very ſcenes themſelves where they uſually aſſembled, that almoſt unavoidably turned the ſtream of their converſations into this uſeful chanel. Their rooms and gardens were generally adorned, you know, with the ſtatues of the greateſt maſters of reaſon that had then appeared in the world; and while Socrates or Ariſtotle ſtood in their view, it is no wonder their diſcourſe fell upon thoſe ſubjects, which ſuch animating repreſentations would naturally ſuggeſt. It is probable,

therefore,

therefore, that many of thoſe antient pieces which are drawn up in the dialogue manner, were no imaginary converſations invented by their authors; but faithful tranſcripts from real life. And it is this circumſtance, perhaps, as much as any other, which contributes to give them that remarkable advantage over the generality of modern compoſitions, which have been formed upon the ſame plan. I am ſure, at leaſt, I could ſcarce name more than three or four of this kind which have appeared in our language, worthy of notice. My lord Shafteſbury's dialogue, entitled The moraliſts; Mr. Addiſon's upon antient Coins; Mr Spence's upon the Odyſſey, together with thoſe of my very ingenious friend Philemon to Hydaſpes; are, almoſt, the only productions in this way, which have hitherto come forth amongſt us with advantage. Theſe, indeed, are all maſterpieces of the kind, and written in the true ſpirit of learning and politeneſs. The converſation in each of theſe moſt elegant performances is conducted, not in the uſual abſurd method of introducing one diſputant to be tamely ſilenced by the other; but in the

the more lively dramatic manner, where a juſt contraſte of characters is preſerved throughout, and where the ſeveral ſpeakers ſupport their reſpective ſentiments with all the ſtrength and ſpirit of a well-bred oppoſition.

But of all the converſation-pieces, whether antient or modern, either of the moral or polite kind, I know not one which is more elegantly written, than the little anonymous dialogue concerning the riſe and decline of Eloquence among the Romans. I call it anonymous, tho I am ſenſible it has been aſcribed, not only to Tacitus and Quinctilian, but even to Suetonius. The reaſons, however, which the critics have reſpectively produced are ſo exceedingly precarious and inconcluſive, that one muſt have a very extraordinary ſhare of claſſical faith indeed, to receive it as the performance of any of thoſe celebrated writers. It is evidently, however, a compoſition of that period in which they floriſhed; and if I were diſpoſed to indulge a conjecture, I ſhould be inclined to give it to the younger Pliny. It exactly coincides with his age; it is addreſſed to one of his particular friends and correſpondents;

reſpondents; it is marked with ſome ſimilar expreſſions and ſentiments. But as arguments of this kind are always more impoſing than ſolid, I recommend it to you as a piece, concerning the author of which, nothing ſatisfactory can be collected. This I may one day or other, perhaps, attempt to prove in form, as I have amuſed myſelf with giving it an Engliſh dreſs. In the mean time I have encloſed my tranſlation in this packet; not only with a view to your ſentiments, but in return to your favor. I was perſuaded I could not make you a better acknowledgment for the pleaſure of that converſation which I lately participated through your means, than by introducing you to one, which (if my copy is not extremely injurious to its original) I am ſure, you cannot attend to without equal entertainment and advantage. Adieu. I am, &c.

A Dialogue[a] concerning

ORATORY.

TO FABIUS.

YOU have frequently, my friend, required me to aſſign a reaſon whence it has happened, that the Oratorical character, which ſpread ſuch a glorious luſtre upon former ages, is now ſo totally extinct amongſt us, as ſcarce to preſerve even its name. It is the antients alone, you obſerved, whom we diſtinguiſh with that appellation; while the Eloquent of the preſent times are ſtyled only pleaders, patrons, advocates, or any thing, in ſhort, but Orators.

HARDLY, I believe, ſhould I have attempted a ſolution of your difficulty, or ventured upon the examination of a queſtion, wherein the genius of the moderns, if they cannot, or their judgment, if they

[a] It is neceſſary to inform thoſe readers of the following dialogue, who may be diſpoſed to compare it with the original, that the edition of Heumannus, printed at Gottingen, 1719, has been generally followed.

will

will not, riſe to the ſame heights, muſt neceſſarily be given up; had I nothing of greater authority to offer upon the ſubject, than my own particular ſentiments. But having been preſent, in the very early part of my life, at a converſation between ſome perſons of great eloquence, conſidering the age in which they lived, who diſcuſſed this very point; my memory, and not my judgment, will be concerned, whilſt I endeavor, in their own ſtyle and manner, and according to the regular courſe of their debate, to lay before you the ſeveral reaſonings of thoſe celebrated geniuſes: each of them, indeed, agreably to the peculiar turn and character of the ſpeaker, alledging different, tho probable cauſes of the ſame fact; but all of them ſupporting their reſpective ſentiments with ingenuity and good ſenſe. Nor were the orators of the preſent age without an advocate in this debate: for one of the company took the oppoſite ſide, and treating the antients with much ſeverity and contempt, declared in favor of modern eloquence.

MARCUS APER and Julius Secundus, two diſtinguiſhed geniuſes of our forum,

made a viſit to Maternus the day after he had publickly recited his tragedy of Cato: a piece, which gave, it ſeems, great offence to thoſe in power, and was much canvaſſed in all converſations. Maternus, indeed, ſeemed throughout that whole performance to have conſidered only what was ſuitable to the character of his hero, without paying a proper regard to thoſe prudential reſtraints, which were neceſſary for his own ſecurity. I was at that time a warm admirer and conſtant follower of thoſe great men; inſomuch that I not only attended them when they were engaged in the courts of judicature; but, from my fond attachment to the arts of eloquence, and with a certain ardency peculiar to youth, I joined in all their parties, and was preſent at their moſt private converſations. Their great abilities, however, could not ſecure them from the critics. They alledged, that Secundus had by no means an eaſy elocution; whilſt Aper, they pretended, owed his reputation as an orator, more to nature than to art. It is certain, nevertheleſs, that their objections were without foundation. The ſpeeches of the former were always delivered with

with ſufficient fluency; and his expreſſion was clear, tho conciſe; as the latter had, moſt undoubtedly, a general tincture of literature. The truth is, one could not ſo properly ſay, he was *without*, as *above* the aſſiſtance of learning. He imagined, perhaps, the powers and application of his genius would be ſo much the more admired, as it ſhould not appear to derive any of its luſtre from the acquired arts.

We found Maternus, when we entered his apartment, with the tragedy in his hand which he had recited the day before. Are you then (ſaid Secundus, addreſſing himſelf to him) ſo little diſcouraged with the malicious inſinuations of theſe ill-natured cenſures, as ſtill to cheriſh this obnoxious tragedy of yours? Or perhaps, you are reviſing it, in order to expunge the exceptionable paſſages; and purpoſe to ſend your Cato into the world, I will not ſay with ſuperior charms, but, at leaſt, with greater ſecurity, than in its original form. You may peruſe it (returned he) if you pleaſe; you will find it remains juſt in the ſame ſituation as when you heard it read. I intend, however, that Thyeſtes ſhall ſupply

the defects of Cato: for I am meditating a tragedy upon that ſubject, and have already, indeed, formed the plan. I am haſtening, therefore, the publication of this play in my hand, that I may apply myſelf entirely to my new deſign. Are you then, in good earneſt (replied Aper) ſo enamored of dramatic poetry, as to renounce the buſineſs of oratory in order to conſecrate your whole leiſure to—Medea, I think, it was before, and now, it ſeems, to Thyeſtes? when the cauſes of ſo many worthy friends, the intereſts of ſo many powerful communities, demand you in the forum: a taſk more than ſufficient to employ your attention, tho neither Cato nor Domitius had any ſhare of it; tho you were not continually turning from one dramatic performance to another, and adding the tales of Greece to the hiſtory of Rome.

I SHOULD be concerned, anſwered Maternus, at the ſeverity of your rebuke, if the frequency of our debates upon this ſubject had not rendered it ſomewhat familiar to me. But how (added he, ſmiling) can you accuſe me of deſerting the buſineſs of my profeſſion, when I am every day engaged

ged in *defending* poetry againſt your accuſations? And I am glad (continued he, looking towards Secundus) that we have now an opportunity of diſcuſſing this point before ſo competent a judge. His deciſion will either determine me to renounce all pretenſions to poetry for the future, or (which I rather hope) will be a ſanction for my quitting that confined ſpecies of oratory, in which, methinks, I have ſufficiently labored, and authorize the devoting myſelf to the more enlarged and ſacred eloquence of the Muſes.

GIVE me leave, interpoſed Secundus, before Aper takes exception to his judge, to ſay, what all honeſt ones uſually do in the ſame circumſtances, that I deſire to be excuſed from ſitting in judgment upon a cauſe, wherein I muſt acknowledge myſelf biaſſed in favor of a party concerned. All the world is ſenſible of that ſtrict friendſhip which has long ſubſiſted between me and that excellent man, as well as great poet, Saleius Baſſus. To which let me add, if the Muſes are to be arraigned, I know of none who can offer more prevailing bribes.

I HAVE nothing to alledge againſt Baſſus (returned Aper) or any other man, who, not having talents for the bar, chooſes to eſtabliſh a reputation of the poetical kind. Nor ſhall I ſuffer Maternus (for I am willing to join iſſue with him before you) to evade my charge, by drawing others into his party. My accuſation is levelled ſingly againſt him; who, formed as he is by nature with a moſt maſculine and truly oratorical genius, chooſes to ſuffer ſo noble a faculty to lie waſte and uncultivated. I muſt remind him, however, that by the exerciſe of this commanding talent, he might at once both acquire and ſupport the moſt important friendſhips, and have the glory to ſee whole provinces and nations rank themſelves under his patronage: a talent of all others, the moſt advantageous, whether conſidered with reſpect to intereſt, or to honors; a talent, in ſhort, that affords the moſt illuſtrious means of propagating a reputation, not only within our own walls, but throughout the whole compaſs of the Roman empire, and indeed to the moſt diſtant nations of the globe.

IF utility ought to be the govering motive

tive of every action and every deſign of our lives; can we poſſibly be employed to better purpoſe, than in the exerciſe of an art, which enables a man, upon all occaſions, to ſupport the intereſt of his friend, to protect the rights of the ſtranger, to defend the cauſe of the injured? that not only renders him the terror of his open and ſecret adverſaries, but ſecures him, as it were, by the moſt firm and permanent guard?

THE particular uſefulneſs, indeed, of this profeſſion is evidently manifeſted in the opportunities it ſupplies of ſerving others, tho we ſhould have no occaſion to exert it in our own behalf: but ſhould we, upon any occurrence, be ourſelves attacked, the ſword and buckler is not a more powerful defence in the day of battle, than oratory in the dangerous ſeaſon of public arraignment. What had Marcellus lately to oppoſe to the united reſentment of the whole ſenate, but his eloquence? Yet ſupported by that formidable auxiliary, he ſtood firm and unmoved, amidſt all the aſſaults of the artful Helvidius; who, notwithſtanding he was a man of ſenſe and elocution, was totally inexpert in the management of this ſort of conteſts.

But

But I need not inſiſt farther on this head; well perſuaded as I am, that Maternus will not controvert ſo clear a truth. Rather let me obſerve the pleaſure which attends the exerciſe of the perſuaſive arts: a pleaſure, which does not ariſe only once, perhaps, in a whole life, but flows in a perpetual ſeries of gratifications. What can be more agreable to a liberal and ingenuous mind, formed with a reliſh of rational enjoyments, than to ſee one's levée crouded with a concourſe of the moſt illuſtrious perſonages; not as followers of your intereſt, or your power; not becauſe you are rich and deſtitute of heirs; but ſingly in conſideration of your ſuperior qualifications. It is not unuſual upon theſe occaſions, to obſerve the wealthy, the powerful, and the childleſs, addreſſing themſelves to a young man (and probably no rich one) in favor of themſelves or their friends. Tell me now, has authority or wealth a charm, equal to the ſatisfaction of thus beholding perſons of the higheſt dignity, venerable by their age, or powerful by their credit, in the full enjoyment of every external advantage, courting your aſſiſtance, and tacitly acknowledging, that,

great

great and diſtinguiſhed as they are, there is ſomething ſtill wanting to them more valuable then all their poſſeſſions? Repreſent to yourſelf the honourable croud of clients conducting the orator from his houſe, and attending him in his return: think of the glorious appearance he makes in public, the diſtinguiſhing reſpect that is paid to him in the courts of judicature, the exultation of heart when he riſes up before a full audience, huſhed in ſolemn ſilence and fixed attention, preſſing round the admired ſpeaker, and receiving every paſſion he deems proper to raiſe? Yet theſe are but the ordinary joys of eloquence, and viſible to every common obſerver. There are others, and thoſe far ſuperior, of a more concealed and delicate kind, and of which the orator himſelf can alone be ſenſible. Does he ſtand forth prepared with a ſtudied harangue? As the compoſition, ſo the pleaſure, in this inſtance, is more ſolid and equal. If, on the other hand, he riſes in a new and unexpected debate, the previous ſolicitude which he feels upon ſuch occaſions, recommends and improves the pleaſure of his ſucceſs; as indeed the moſt exquiſite

quiſite ſatisfaction of this kind is, when he boldly hazards the unpremeditated ſpeech. For it is in the productions of genius, as in the fruits of the earth; thoſe which ariſe ſpontaneouſly, are ever the moſt agreable. If I may venture to mention myſelf, I muſt acknowledge, that neither the ſatisfaction I received when I was firſt inveſted with the laticlave, nor even when I entered upon the ſeveral high poſts in the ſtate; tho the pleaſure was heightened to me, not only as thoſe honors were new to my family, but as I was born in a city by no means favorable to my pretenſions:——The warm tranſports, I ſay, which I felt at thoſe times, were far inferior to the joy which has glowed in my breaſt, when I have ſucceſsfully exerted my humble talents in defence of thoſe cauſes and clients committed to my care. To ſay truth, I imagined myſelf, at ſuch ſeaſons, to be raiſed above the higheſt dignities, and in the poſſeſſion of ſomething far more valuable, than either the favor of the great, or the bounty of the wealthy can ever beſtow.

Of all the arts or ſciences, there is no one, which crowns its votaries with a reputation

tation in any degree comparable to that of eloquence. It is not only thoſe of a more exalted rank in the ſtate, who are witneſſes of the orator's fame; it is extended to the obſervation even of our very youth of any hopes or merit. Whoſe example, for inſtance, do parents more frequently recommend to their ſons? or who are more the gaze and admiration of the people in general? whilſt every ſtranger that arrives, is curious of ſeeing the man, of whoſe character he has heard ſuch honourable report. I will venture to affirm, that Marcellus, whom I juſt now mentioned, and Vibius (for I chooſe to produce my inſtances from modern times, rather than from thoſe more remote) are as well known in the moſt diſtant corners of the empire, as they are at Capua or Vercellæ, the places, it is ſaid, of their reſpective nativity: an honor, for which they are by no means indebted to their immenſe riches. On the contrary, their wealth may juſtly, it ſhould ſeem, be aſcribed to their eloquence. Every age, indeed, can produce perſons of genius, who, by means of this powerful talent, have raiſed themſelves to the moſt exalted ſtation.

But

But the inſtances I juſt now mentioned, are not drawn from diſtant times: they fall within the obſervation of our own eyes. Now the more obſcure the original extraction of thoſe illuſtrious perſons was, the more humble the patrimony to which they were born, ſo much ſtronger proof they afford of the great advantage of the oratorical arts. Accordingly, without the recommendation of family or fortune; without any thing very extraordinary in their virtues (and one of them rather contemptible in his addreſs) they have for many years maintained the higheſt credit and authority among their fellow citizens. Thus, from being chiefs in the forum, where they preſerved their diſtinguiſhed eminence as long as they thought proper; they have paſſed on to the enjoyment of the ſame high rank in Veſpaſian's favor, whoſe eſteem for them ſeems to be mixed even with a degree of reverence: as indeed they both ſupport and conduct the whole weight of his adminiſtration. That excellent and venerable prince (whoſe ſingular character it is, that he can endure to hear truth) well knows that the reſt of his favorites are diſtinguiſhed only as

they are the objects of his munificence; the ſupplies of which he can eaſily raiſe, and with the ſame facility confer on others. Whereas Criſpus and Marcellus recommended themſelves to his notice by advantages which no earthly potentate either did, or could, beſtow. The truth of it is, inſcriptions, and ſtatues, and enſigns of dignity could claim but the loweſt rank, amidſt *their* more illuſtrious diſtinctions. Not that they are unpoſſeſſed of honors of this kind, any more than they are deſtitute of wealth or power: advantages, much oftener affectedly depretiated, than ſincerely deſpiſed.

Such, my friends, are the ornaments, and ſuch the rewards of an early application to the buſineſs of the forum, and the arts of oratory! But poetry, to which Maternus wiſhes to devote his days (for it was that which gave riſe to our debate) confers neither dignity to her followers in particular, nor advantage to ſociety in general. The whole amount of her pretenſions is nothing more than the tranſient pleaſure of a vain and fruitleſs applauſe. Perhaps what I have already ſaid, and am going to add, may

not

not be very agreable to my friend Maternus: however, I will venture to aſk him, what avails the eloquence of his Jaſon or Agamemnon? what mortal does it either defend or oblige? Who is it that courts the patronage, or joins the train, of Baſſus, that ingenious (or if you think the term more honorable) that illuſtrious poet? Eminent as he may be, if his friend, his relation, or himſelf were involved in any litigated tranſactions, he would be under the neceſſity of having recourſe to Secundus, or perhaps to you, my friend [b]: but by no means, however, as you are a poet, and in order to ſolicit you to beſtow ſome verſes upon him: for verſes he can compoſe himſelf, fair, it ſeems, and goodly.—Yet after all, when he has at the coſt of much time, and many a labored lucubration, ſpun out a ſingle canto, he is obliged to traverſe the whole town in order to collect an audience. Nor can he procure even this compliment, ſlight as it is, without actually purchaſing it: for the hiring a room, erecting a ſtage, and diſperſing his tickets, are articles which muſt neceſſarily be attended with ſome expence.

[b] Maternus.

And let us ſuppoſe his poem is approved: the whole admiration is over in a day or two, like that of a fine flower which dies away without producing any fruit. In a word, it ſecures to him neither friend nor patron, nor confers even the moſt inconſiderable favor upon any ſingle creature. The whole amount of his humble gains, is the fleeting pleaſure of a clamorous applauſe! We looked upon it, lately, as an uncommon inſtance of generoſity in Veſpatian, that he preſented Baſſus with fifty thouſand ſeſterces [b]. Honorable, I grant, it is, to poſſeſs a genius which merits the imperial bounty: but how much more glorious (if a man's circumſtances will admit of it) to exhibit in one's own perſon an example of munificence and liberality? Let it be remembered likewiſe, if you would ſucceed in your poetical labors, and produce any thing of real worth in that art, you muſt retire, as the poets expreſs themſelves,

To ſilent grottoes and ſequeſter'd groves.

That is, you muſt renounce the converſation of your friends, and every civil duty

[b] About 400 l. of our money.

of life, to be concealed in gloomy and unprofitable ſolitude.

If we conſider the votaries of this idle art with reſpect to fame, that ſingle recompence which they pretend to derive, or indeed to ſeek, from their ſtudies; we ſhall find, they do not by any means enjoy an equal proportion of it with the ſons of Oratory. For even the beſt poets fall within the notice of but a very ſmall proportion of mankind; whilſt indifferent ones are univerſally diſregarded. Tell me, Maternus, did ever the reputation of the moſt approved rehearſal of the poetical kind, reach the cognizance even of half the town; much leſs extend itſelf to diſtant provinces? Did ever any foreigner upon his arrival here, enquire after Baſſus? Or if he did, it was merely as he would after a picture or a ſtatue; juſt to look upon him, and paſs on. I would in no ſort be underſtood as diſcouraging the purſuit of poetry in thoſe who have no talents for oratory; if happily they can by that means, amuſe their leiſure and eſtabliſh a juſt character. I look upon every ſpecies of Eloquence as venerable and ſacred; and prefer her, in whatever guiſe ſhe may

may think proper to appear, before any other of her ſiſter-arts: not only, Maternus, when ſhe exhibits herſelf in your choſen favorite, the ſolemn tragedy, or lofty heroic, but even in the pleaſant lyric, the wanton elegy, the ſevere iambic, the witty epigram, or, in one word, in whatever other habit ſhe is pleaſed to aſſume. But (I repeat it again) my complaint is levelled ſingly againſt you; who, deſigned as you are by nature for the moſt exalted rank of eloquence, chooſe to deſert your ſtation, and deviate into a lower order. Had you been endued with the athletic vigor of Nicoſtratus, and born in Greece, where arts of that ſort are eſteemed not unworthy of the moſt refined characters; as I could not patiently have ſuffered that uncommon ſtrength of arm, formed for the nobler combat, to have idly ſpent itſelf in throwing the javelin, or toſſing the coit: ſo I now call you forth from rehearſals and theatres, to the forum, and buſineſs, and high debate: eſpecially ſince you cannot urge the ſame plea for engaging in poetry which is now generally alledged, that it is leſs liable to give offence than oratory. For the ardency of your ge-

nius has already flamed forth, and you have incurred the diſpleaſure of our ſuperiors: not, indeed, for the ſake of a friend; *that* would have been far leſs dangerous; but in ſupport, truly, of *Cato!* Nor can you offer in excuſe, either the duty of your profeſſion, juſtice to your client, or the unguarded heat of debate. You fixed, it ſhould ſeem, upon this illuſtrious and popular ſubject with deliberate deſign, and as a character that would give weight and authority to your ſentiments. You will reply (I am aware) "it was that very circumſtance "which gained you ſuch univerſal applauſe, "and rendered you the general topic of diſ-"courſe." Talk no more then, I beſeech you, of ſecurity and repoſe, whilſt you thus induſtriouſly raiſe up to yourſelf ſo potent an adverſary. For my own part, at leaſt, I am contented with engaging in queſtions of a more modern and private nature; wherein, if in defence of a friend I am under a neceſſity of taking liberties unacceptable, perhaps, to my ſuperiors, the honeſt freedom of my zeal will, I truſt, not only be excuſed but applauded.

APER having delivered this with his uſual

uſual warmth and earneſtneſs, I am prepar'd (replied Maternus, in a milder tone and with an air of pleaſantry) to draw up a charge againſt the orators, no leſs copious than my friend's panegyric in their behalf. I ſuſpected, indeed, he would turn out of his road, in order to attack the poets: tho, I muſt own at the ſame time, he has ſomewhat ſoftened the ſeverity of his ſatire, by certain conceſſions he is pleaſed to make in their favor. He is willing, I perceive, to allow thoſe whoſe genius does not point to oratory, to apply themſelves to poetry. Nevertheleſs, I do not ſcruple to acknowledge, that with ſome talents, perhaps, for the forum, I choſe to build my reputation on dramatic poetry. The firſt attempt I made for this purpoſe, was by expoſing the dangerous power of Vatinius: a power which even Nero himſelf diſapproved, and which that infamous favorite abuſed, to the profanation of the ſacred Muſes. And I am perſuaded, if I enjoy any ſhare of fame, it is to poetry rather than to oratory that I am indebted for the acquiſition. It is my fixed purpoſe, therefore, entirely to withdraw myſelf from the fatigue of the

bar. I am by no means ambitious of that ſplendid concourſe of clients, which Aper has repreſented in ſuch pompous colors, any more than I am of thoſe ſculptured honors which he mentioned; tho I muſt confeſs, they have made their way into my family, notwithſtanding my inclinations to the contrary. Innocence is, now at leaſt, a ſurer guard than eloquence; and I am in no apprehenſion I ſhall ever have occaſion to open my lips in the ſenate, unleſs, perhaps, in defence of a friend.

Woods and groves and ſolitude, the objects of Aper's invective, afford me, I will own to him, the moſt exquiſite ſatisfaction. Accordingly, I eſteem it one of the great privileges of poetry, that it is not carried on in the noiſe and tumult of the world, amidſt the painful importunity of anxious ſuitors, and the affecting tears of diſtreſſed criminals. On the contrary, a mind enamored of the Muſes retires into ſcenes of innocence and repoſe, and enjoys the ſacred haunts of ſilence and contemplation. Here genuine Eloquence received her birth, and *here* ſhe fixed her ſacred and ſequeſtered habitation. 'Twas *here*, in decent

cent and becoming garb, ſhe recommended herſelf to the early notice of mortals, inſpiring the breaſts of the blameleſs and the good: *here* firſt the voice divine of oracles was heard. But *ſhe* of modern growth, offſpring of lucre and contention, was born in evil days, and employed (as Aper very juſtly expreſſed it) inſtead of *weapon:* whilſt happier times, or, in the language of the Muſes, the golden age, free alike from orators and from crimes, abounded with inſpired poets, who exerted their noble talents, not in defending the guilty, but in celebrating the good. Accordingly no character was ever more eminently diſtinguiſhed, or more auguſtly honored: firſt by the gods themſelves, to whom the poets were ſuppoſed to ſerve as miniſters at their feaſts, and meſſengers of their high beheſts; and afterwards by that ſacred offſpring of the gods, the firſt venerable race of legiſlators. In that glorious liſt we read the names, not of orators indeed, but of Orpheus, and Linus, or, if we are inclined to trace the illuſtrious roll ſtill higher, even of Apollo himſelf.

But theſe, perhaps, will be treated by Aper as heroes of Romance. He cannot

however deny, that Homer has received as ſignal honors from poſterity, as Demoſthenes; or that the fame of Sophocles or Euripides is as extenſive, as that of Lyſias or Hyperides; that Cicero's merit is leſs univerſally confeſſed than Virgil's; or that not one of the compoſitions of Aſinius or Meſſala is in ſo much requeſt, as the Medea of Ovid, or the Thyeſtes of Varius. I will advance even farther, and venture to compare the unenvied fortune and happy ſelf-converſe of the poet, with the anxious and buſy life of the orator; notwithſtanding the hazardous contentions of the latter may poſſibly raiſe him even to the conſular dignity. Far more deſirable, in my eſtimation, was the calm retreat of Virgil: where yet he lived not unhonored by his prince, nor unregarded by the world. If the truth of either of theſe aſſertions ſhould be queſtioned, the letters of Auguſtus will witneſs the former; as the latter is evident from the conduct of the whole Roman people, who when ſome verſes of that divine poet were repeated in the theatre, where he happened to be preſent, roſe up to a man, and ſaluted him with the ſame reſpect that they would

would have paid to Auguſtus himſelf. But to mention our own times: I would aſk whether Secundus Pomponius is any thing inferior, either in dignity of life, or ſolidity of reputation, to Afer Domitius? As to Criſpus or Marcellus, to whom Aper refers me for an animating example, what is there in their preſent exalted fortunes really deſirable? Is it that they paſs their whole lives either in being alarmed for themſelves, or in ſtriking terror into others? Is it that they are daily under a neceſſity of courting the very men they hate; that, holding their dignities by unmanly adulation, their maſters never think them ſufficiently ſlaves, nor the people ſufficiently free? And, after all, what is this their ſo much envied power? Nothing more, in truth, than what many a paltry freedman has frequently enjoyed. But—"ME let the lovely Muſes lead (as "Virgil ſings) to ſilent groves and heaven-"ly-haunted ſtreams, remote from buſi-"neſs and from care; and ſtill ſuperior to "the painful neceſſity of acting in wretch-"ed oppoſition to my better heart. Nor "let me more, with anxious ſteps and "dangerous, purſue pale Fame amidſt the "noiſy

" noiſy forum! May never clamorous ſuit-
" ors, nor panting freed-man with offici-
" ous haſte, awake my peaceful ſlumbers!
" Uncertain of futurity, and equally un-
" concerned, ne'er may I bribe the favor
" of the great; by rich bequeſts to avarice
" inſatiate; nor, accumulation vain! amaſs
" more wealth than I may transfer as in-
" clination prompts, whenever ſhall arrive
" my life's laſt fatal period: And then,
" not in horrid guiſe of mournful pomp,
" but crowned with chaplets gay, may I be
" entombed; nor let a friend, with unavail-
" ing zeal, ſollicit the uſeleſs tribute of poſt-
" humous memorials!"

MATERNUS had ſcarce finiſhed theſe words, which he uttered with great emotion, and with an air of inſpiration, when Meſſalla entered the room; who, obſerving much attention in our countenances, and imagining the converſation turned upon ſomething of more than ordinary import; Perhaps, ſaid he, you are engaged in a *conſultation*, and, I doubt, I am guilty of an unſeaſonable interruption. By no means, anſwered Secundus: on the contrary, I wiſh you had given us your company ſooner; for,

I am

I am perſuaded, you would have been extremely entertained. Our friend Aper has, with great eloquence, been exhorting Maternus, to turn the whole ſtrength of his genius and his ſtudies to the buſineſs of the forum: while Maternus, on the other hand, agreably to the character of one who was pleading the cauſe of the Muſes, has defended his favorite art with a boldneſs and elevation of ſtyle more ſuitable to a poet than an orator.

It would have afforded me infinite pleaſure, replied Meſſalla, to have been preſent at a debate of this kind. And I cannot but expreſs my ſatisfaction, in finding the moſt eminent orators of our times, not confining their geniuſes to points relating to their profeſſion; but canvaſſing ſuch other topics in their converſation, as give a very advantageous exerciſe to their faculties, at the ſame time that it furniſhes an entertainment of the moſt inſtructive kind, not only to themſelves, but to thoſe who have the privilege of being joined in their party. And believe me, Secundus, the world received with much approbation your hiſtory of J. Aſiaticus, as an earneſt that you intend to

publiſh

publiſh more pieces of the ſame nature. On the other ſide (continued he, with an air of irony) it is obſerved with equal ſatisfaction, that Aper has not yet bid adieu to the queſtions of the ſchools, but employs his leiſure rather after the example of the modern rhetoricians, than of the antient orators.

I PERCEIVE, returned Aper, that you continue to treat the moderns with your uſual deriſion and contempt; while the antients alone are in full poſſeſſion of your eſteem. It is a maxim, indeed, I have frequently heard you advance (and, allow me to ſay, with much injuſtice to yourſelf and to your brother) that there is no ſuch thing in the preſent age as an orator. This you are the leſs ſcrupulous to maintain, as you imagine it cannot be imputed to a ſpirit of envy; ſince you are willing at the ſame time to exclude yourſelf from a character which every body elſe is inclined to give you.

I HAVE hitherto, replied Meſſalla, found no reaſon to change my opinion: and I am perſuaded, that even you yourſelf, Aper, (whatever you may ſometimes affect to the contrary)

contrary) as well as my other two friends here, join with me in the ſame ſentiments. I ſhould, indeed, be glad, if any of you would diſcuſs this matter, and account for ſo remarkable a diſparity; which I have often endeavored in my own thoughts. And what to ſome appears a ſatisfactory ſolution of this phænomenon, to me, I confeſs, heightens the difficulty: for I find the very ſame difference prevails among the Grecian orators; and that the prieſt Nicetes, together with others of the Epheſian and Mitylenean ſchools, who humbly content themſelves with raiſing the acclamations of their taſteleſs auditors, deviate much farther from Æſchines or Demoſthenes, than you, my friends, from Tully or Aſinius.

The queſtion you have ſtarted, ſaid Secundus, is a very important one, and well worthy of conſideration. But who ſo capable of doing juſtice to it as yourſelf? who, beſides the advantages of a fine genius and great litterature, have given, it ſeems, particular attention to this enquiry. I am very willing, anſwered Meſſalla, to lay before you my thoughts upon the ſubject, provided you will aſſiſt me with yours as I go along.

along. I will engage for two of us, replied Maternus: Secundus and myſelf will ſpeak to ſuch points as you ſhall, I do not ſay omit, but, think proper to leave us. As for Aper, you juſt now informed us, it is uſual with him to diſſent from you in this article: and, indeed, I ſee he is already preparing to oppoſe us, and will not look with indifference upon this our aſſociation in ſupport of the antients.

UNDOUBTEDLY, returned Aper, I ſhall not tamely ſuffer the moderns to be condemned, unheard and undefended. But firſt let me aſk, whom it is you call *antients?* What age of orators do you diſtinguiſh by that deſignation? The word always ſuggeſts to me a Neſtor, or an Ulyſſes; men who lived above a thouſand years ſince: whereas you ſeem to apply it to Demoſthenes and Hyperides, who, it is agreed, floriſhed ſo late as the times of Philip and Alexander, and, indeed, ſurvived them. It appears from hence, that there is not much above four hundred years diſtance between our age and that of Demoſthenes: a portion of time, which, conſidered with reſpect to human duration, appears, I acknowledge,

knowledge, extremely long; but, if compared with that immenſe æra which the philoſophers talk of, is exceedingly contracted, and ſeems almoſt but of yeſterday. For if it be true, what Cicero obſerves in his treatiſe inſcribed to Hortenſius, that the great and genuine year is that period in which the heavenly bodies return to the ſame poſition, wherein they were placed when they firſt began their reſpective orbits; and this revolution contains 12,954 of our ſolar years; then Demoſthenes, this antient Demoſthenes of yours, lived in the ſame year, or rather I might ſay, in the ſame month, with ourſelves. But to mention the Roman orators: I preſume, you will ſcarcely prefer Menenius Agrippa (who may with ſome propriety, indeed, be called an antient) to the men of eloquence among the moderns. It is Cicero, then, I ſuppoſe, together with Cœlius, Cæſar, and Calvus, Brutus, Aſinius, and Meſſalla, to whom you give this honorable precedency: yet I am at a loſs to aſſign a reaſon, why theſe ſhould be deemed antients rather than moderns. To inſtance in Cicero: he was killed, as his freedman Tiro informs us, on the 26th of December,

December, in the conſulſhip of Hirtius and Panſa, in which year Auguſtus and Pedius ſucceeded them in that dignity. Now, if we take fifty-ſix years for the reign of Auguſtus, and add twenty-three for that of Tiberius, about four for that of Caius, fourteen a-piece for Claudius and Nero, one for Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, together with the ſix that our preſent excellent[a] prince has enjoyed the empire, we ſhall have about one hundred and twenty years from the death of Cicero to theſe times: a period, to which it is not impoſſible that a man's life may extend. I remember, when I was in Britain, to have met with an old ſoldier, who aſſured me, he had ſerved in the army which oppoſed Cæſar's deſcent upon that iſland. If we ſuppoſe this perſon, by being taken priſoner, or by any other means, to have been brought to Rome, he

[a] From this paſſage Fabricius aſſerts, that this dialogue was written in the 6th year of Veſpatian's reign: but he evidently miſtakes the time in which the ſcene of it is laid, for that in which it was compoſed. It is upon arguments not better founded, that the critics have given Tacitus and Quintilian the honor of this elegant performance. *Vide Fabric. Bib. Lat.* V. I. 559.

might have heard Cæſar and Cicero, and likewiſe any of our contemporaries. I appeal to yourſelves, whether at the laſt public donative, there were not ſeveral of the populace who acknowledged they had received the ſame bounty, more than once, from the hands of Auguſtus? It is evident, therefore, that theſe people might have been preſent at the pleadings both of Corvinus and Aſinius: for Corvinus was alive in the middle of the reign of Auguſtus, and Aſinius towards the latter end. Surely, then, you will not ſplit a century, and call one orator an antient, and another a modern, when the very ſame perſon might be an auditor of both; and thus, as it were, render them contemporaries.

The concluſion I mean to draw from this obſervation is, that whatever advantages theſe orators might derive to their characters, from the period of time in which they floriſhed, the ſame will extend to us: and, indeed, with much more reaſon than to S. Galba, or to C. Carbonius. It cannot be denied, that the compoſitions of theſe laſt are very inelegant and unpoliſhed perform-

ances; as I could wiſh, that not only your admired Calvus and Cœlius, but, I will venture to add too, even Cicero himſelf (for I ſhall deliver my ſentiments with great freedom) had not conſidered them as the proper models of their imitation. Suffer me to premiſe, however, as I go along, that eloquence changes its qualities as it runs through different ages. Thus as Gracchus, for inſtance, is much more copious and florid than old Cato, ſo Craſſus riſes into a far higher ſtrain of politeneſs and refinement than Gracchus. Thus likewiſe, as the ſpeeches of Tully are more regular, and marked with ſuperior elegance and ſublimity, than thoſe of the two orators laſt mentioned; ſo Corvinus is conſiderably more ſmooth and harmonious in his periods, as well as more correct in his language, than Tully. I am not conſidering, which of them is moſt eloquent: All I endeavor to prove at preſent is, that oratory does not manifeſt itſelf in one uniform figure, but is exhibited by the antients under a variety of different appearances. However, it is by no means a juſt way of reaſoning, to infer

fer that one thing muſt neceſſarily be worſe than another, merely becauſe it is not the ſame. Yet ſuch is the unacountable perverſity of human nature, that whatever has antiquity to boaſt, is ſure to be admired, as every thing novel is certainly diſapproved. There are critics, I doubt not, to be found, who prefer even Appius Cœcus to Cato; as it is well known that Cicero had his cenſurers, who objected that his ſtyle was ſwelling and redundant, and by no means agreable to the elegant conciſeneſs of Attic eloquence. You have certainly read the letters of Calvus and Brutus to Cicero. It appears by thoſe epiſtolary collections, that Cicero conſidered Calvus as a dry, unanimated orator, at the ſame time that he thought the ſtyle of Brutus negligent and unconnected. Theſe, in their turn, had their objections, it ſeems, to Cicero: Calvus condemned his oratorical compoſitions, for being weak and enervated; as Brutus (to uſe his own expreſſion) eſteemed them *feeble* and *disjointed*. If I were to give my opinion, I ſhould ſay, they each ſpoke truth of one another. But I ſhall examine theſe orators ſeparately hereafter: my preſent de-

ſign is only to conſider them in a general view.

The admirers of antiquity are agreed, I think, in extending the æra of the antients as far as Caſſius Severus; whom they aſſert to have been the firſt that ſtruck out from the plain and ſimple manner, which till then prevailed. Now I affirm that he did ſo, not from any deficiency in point of genius or learning, but from his ſuperior judgment and good ſenſe. He ſaw it was neceſſary to accommodate oratory, as I obſerved before, to the different times and taſte of the audience. Our anceſtors, indeed, might be contented (and it was a mark of their ignorance and want of politeneſs that they were ſo) with the immoderate and tedious length of ſpeeches, which was in vogue in thoſe ages; as, in truth, to be able to harangue for a whole day together was itſelf looked upon, at that illiterate period, as a talent worthy of the higheſt admiration. The immeaſurable introduction, the circumſtantial detail, the endleſs diviſion and ſubdiviſion, the formal argument drawn out into a dull variety of logical deductions, together with a thouſand other impertinencies

cies of the ſame taſteleſs ſtamp, which you may find laid down among the precepts of thoſe drieſt of all writers, Hermagoras and Apollodorus, were then held in ſupreme honor. And, to complete all, if the orator had juſt dipped into philoſophy, and could ſprinkle his harangue with ſome of the moſt trite maxims of that ſcience, they thundered out his applauſes to the ſkies. For theſe were new and uncommon topics to them; as indeed very few of the orators themſelves had the leaſt acquaintance with the writings either of the philoſophers or the rhetoricians. But in our more enlightened age, where even the loweſt part of an audience have at leaſt ſome general notion of literature, Eloquence is conſtrained to find out new and more florid paths. She is obliged to avoid every thing that may fatigue or offend the ears of her audience; eſpecially as ſhe muſt now appear before judges, who decide, not by law, but by authority; who preſcribe what limits they think proper to the orator's ſpeech; nor calmly wait till he is pleaſed to come to the point, but call upon him to return, and openly teſtify their impatience whenever he

ſeems diſpoſed to wander from the queſti on Who, I beſeech you, would, in our da ys endure an orator, who ſhould open his harangue with a tedious apology for the weakneſs of his conſtitution? Yet almoſt every oration of Corvinus ſets out in that manner. Would any man *now* have patience to hear out the five long books againſt Verres? or thoſe endleſs volumes of pleading in favor of Tully, or Cæcina? The vivacity of our modern judges even prevents the ſpeaker; and they are apt to conceive ſome ſort of prejudice againſt all he utters, unleſs he has the addreſs to bribe their attention by the ſtrength and ſpirit of his arguments, the livelineſs of his ſentiments, or the elegance and brilliancy of his deſcriptions. The very populace have ſome notion of the beauty of language, and would no more reliſh the uncouthneſs of antiquity in a modern orator, than they would the geſture of old Roſcius or Ambivius in a modern actor. Our young ſtudents too, who are forming themſelves to eloquence, and for that purpoſe attend the courts of judicature, expect not merely to *hear*, but to carry home ſomething worthy of remembrance: and it is

uſual

uſual with them, not only to canvaſs among themſelves, but to tranſmit to their reſpective provinces, whatever ingenious thought or poetical ornament the orator has happily employed. For even the embelliſhments of poetry are now required; and thoſe too, not copied from the heavy and antiquated manner of Attius or Pacuvius, but formed in the lively and elegant ſpirit of Horace, Virgil, and Lucan. Agreably, therefore, to the ſuperior taſte and judgment of the preſent age, our orators appear with a more poliſhed and graceful aſpect. And moſt certainly it cannot be thought that their ſpeeches are the leſs efficacious, becauſe they ſoothe the ears of the audience with the pleaſing modulation of harmonious periods. Has Eloquence loſt her power, becauſe ſhe has improved her charms? Are our temples leſs durable than thoſe of old, becauſe they are not formed of rude materials, but ſhine out in all the poliſh and ſplendor of the moſt coſtly ornaments?

To confeſs the plain truth, the effect which many of the antients have upon me, is to diſpoſe me either to laugh or ſleep. Not to mention the more ordinary race of

orators, ſuch as Canutius, Arrius, or Fannius, with ſome others of the ſame dry and unaffecting caſt; even Calvus himſelf ſcarce pleaſes me in more than one or two ſhort orations: tho he has left behind him, if I miſtake not, no leſs than one and twenty volumes. And the world in general ſeems to join with me in the ſame opinion of them: for how few are the readers of his invectives againſt Fſcinius, or Druſus? Whereas thoſe againſt Vatinius are in every body's hands, particularly the ſecond, which is indeed, both in ſentiment and language, a well-written piece. It is evident therefore, that he had an idea of juſt compoſition, and rather wanted genius than inclination, to reach a more graceful and elevated manner. As to the orations of Cœlius, though they are by no means valuable upon the whole, yet they have their merit, ſo far as they approach to the exalted elegance of the preſent times. Whenever, indeed, his compoſition is careleſs and unconnected, his expreſſion low, and his ſentiments groſs; it is then he is truly an antient: and I will venture to affirm, there is no one ſo fond of antiquity as to admire him in that part of his

his character. We may allow Cæſar, on account of the great affairs in which he was engaged; as we may Brutus, in conſideration of his philoſophy, to be leſs eloquent than might otherwiſe be expected of ſuch ſuperior geniuſes. The truth is, even their warmeſt admirers acknowledge, that as orators they by no means ſhine with the ſame luſtre, which diſtinguiſhed every other part of their reputation. Cæſar's ſpeech in favor of Decius, and that of Brutus in behalf of king Dejotarus, with ſome others of the ſame coldneſs and languor, have ſcarcely, I imagine, met with any readers; unleſs, perhaps, among ſuch who can reliſh their verſes. For verſes, we know, they writ (and publiſhed too) I will not ſay with more ſpirit, but undoubtedly with more ſucceſs, than Cicero, becauſe they had the good fortune to fall into much fewer hands. Aſinius, one would gueſs, by his air and manner, to have been contemporary with Menenius, and Appius; tho in fact he lived much nearer to our times. It is viſible he was a cloſe imitator of Attius and Pacuvius, not only in his tragedies, but alſo in his orations; ſo re-

markably dry and unpoliſhed are all his compoſitions! But the beauty of eloquence, like that of the human form, conſiſts in the ſmoothneſs, ſtrength, and color of its ſeveral parts. Corvinus I am inclined to ſpare; tho it was his own fault that he did not equal the elegant refinements of modern compoſitions; as it muſt be acknowledged his genius was abundantly ſufficient for that purpoſe.

The next I ſhall take notice of, is Cicero; who had the ſame conteſt with thoſe of his own times, as mine, my friends, with you. They, it ſeems, were favorers of the antients; whilſt He preferred the eloquence of his contemporaries: and, in truth, he excels the orators of his own age in nothing more remarkably, than in the ſolidity of his judgment. He was the firſt who ſet a poliſh upon oratory; who ſeemed to have any notion of delicacy of expreſſion, and the art of compoſition. Accordingly he attempted a more florid ſtyle: as he now and then breaks out into ſome lively flaſhes of wit: particularly in his later performances, when much practice and experience (thoſe beſt and ſureſt guides) had taught

taught him a more improved manner. But his earlier compoſitions are not without the blemiſhes of antiquity. He is tedious in his exordiums, too circumſtantial in his narrations, and careleſs in retrenching luxuriances. He ſeems not eaſily affected, and is but rarely fired; as his periods are ſeldom either properly rounded, or happily pointed: he has nothing, in fine, you would wiſh to make your own. His ſpeeches, like a rude edifice, have ſtrength, indeed, and permanency; but are deſtitute of that elegance and ſplendor which are neceſſary to render them perfectly agreable. The orator, however, in his compoſitions, as the man of wealth in his buildings, ſhould conſider ornament as well as uſe: his ſtructure ſhould be, not only ſubſtantial, but ſtriking; and his furniture not merely convenient, but rich, and ſuch as will bear a cloſe and frequent inſpection; whilſt every thing that has a mean and aukward appearance ought to be totally baniſhed. Let our orator then reject every expreſſion that is obſolete, and grown ruſty, as it were, by age: let him be careful not to weaken the force of his ſentiments by a heavy and inartificial

artificial combination of words, like our dull compilers of annals: let him avoid all low and inſipid raillery; in a word let him vary the ſtructure of his periods, nor end every ſentence with the ſame uniform cloſe.

I WILL not expoſe the meanneſs of Cicero's conceits, nor his affectation of concluding almoſt every other period with, *as it ſhould ſeem*, inſtead of pointing them with ſome lively and ſpirited turn. I mention even theſe with reluctance, and paſs over many others of the ſame injudicious caſt. It is ſingly, however, in little affectations of this kind, that they who are pleaſed to ſtyle themſelves *antient orators* ſeem to admire and imitate him. I ſhall content myſelf with deſcribing their characters, without mentioning their names: but, you are ſenſible, there are certain pretenders to taſte who prefer Lucilius to Horace, and Lucretius to Virgil; who hold the eloquence of your favorite Baſſus or Nonianus in the utmoſt contempt, when compared with that of Siſenna or Varro; in a word, who deſpiſe the productions of our modern rhetoricians, yet are in raptures with thoſe of Calvus. Theſe curious orators prate in the courts of judicature

judicature after the *manner of the antients* (as they call it) till they are deſerted by the whole audience, and are ſcarce ſupportable even to their very clients. The truth of it is, that ſoundneſs of eloquence which they ſo much boaſt, is but an evidence of the natural weakneſs of their genius, as it is the effect alone of tame and cautious art. No phyſician would pronounce a man to enjoy a proper conſtitution, whoſe health proceeded entirely from a ſtudied and abſtemious regimen. To be only not indiſpoſed, is but a ſmall acquiſition; it is ſpirits, vivacity, and vigor that I require: whatever comes ſhort of this, is but one remove from imbecillity.

Be it then (as with great eaſe it may, and in fact is) the glorious diſtinction of you, my illuſtrious friends, to ennoble our age with the moſt refined eloquence. It is with infinite ſatisfaction, Meſſalla, I obſerve, that you ſingle out the moſt florid among the antients for your model. And you, my other two ingenious friends [c], ſo happily unite ſtrength of ſentiment with beauty of expreſſion; ſuch a pregnancy of imagina-

[c] Maternus and Secundus.

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tion, ſuch a ſymmetry of ordonnance diſtinguiſh your ſpeeches; ſo copious or ſo conciſe is your elocution, as different occaſions require; ſuch an inimitable gracefulneſs of ſtyle, and ſuch an eaſy flow of wit adorn and dignify your compoſitions: in a word, ſo abſolutely you command the paſſions of your audience, and ſo happily temper your own, that, however the envy and malignity of the preſent age may withold that applauſe which is ſo juſtly your due, poſterity, you may rely upon it, will ſpeak of you in the advantageous terms which you well deſerve.

When Aper had thus finiſhed: It muſt be owned, ſaid Maternus, our friend has ſpoken with much force and ſpirit. What a torrent of learning and eloquence has he poured forth in defence of the moderns! and how completely vanquiſhed the antients with thoſe very weapons which he borrowed from them! However, (continued he, applying himſelf to Meſſalla) you muſt not recede from your engagement. Not that we expect you ſhould enter into a defence of the antients, or ſuppoſe (however Aper is pleaſed to compliment) that any of

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us can ſtand in competition with them. Aper himſelf does not ſincerely think ſo, I dare ſay; but takes the oppoſite ſide in the debate, merely in imitation of the celebrated manner of antiquity. We do not deſire you, therefore, to entertain us with a panegyric upon the antients: their well-eſtabliſhed reputation places them far above the want of our encomiums. But what we requeſt of you is, to account for our having ſo widely departed from that noble ſpecies of eloquence which they diſplayed: eſpecially ſince we are not, according to Aper's calculation, more than a hundred and twenty years diſtant from Cicero.

I SHALL endeavor, returned Meſſalla, to purſue the plan you have laid down to me.——I ſhall not enter into the queſtion with Aper, (tho indeed he is the firſt that ever made it one) whether thoſe who floriſhed above a century before us, can properly be ſtyled antients. I am not diſpoſed to contend about words: let them be called antients, or anceſtors, or whatever other name he pleaſes, ſo it be allowed their oratory was ſuperior to ours. I admit too, what he juſt now advanced, that there are various

various kinds of eloquence diſcernible in the ſame period; much more in different ages. But as among the Attic orators, Demoſthenes is placed in the firſt rank, then Æſchines, Hyperides next, and after him Lyſias and Lycurgus; an æra, which on all hands is agreed to have been the prime ſeaſon of oratory: ſo amongſt us, Cicero is by univerſal conſent preferred to all his contemporaries; as after him, Calvus, Aſinius, Cæſar, Cœlius, and Brutus, are juſtly acknowledged to have excelled all our preceding or ſubſequent orators. Nor is it of any importance to the preſent argument, that they differ in manner, ſince they agree in kind. The compoſitions of Calvus, it is confeſſed, are diſtinguiſhed by their remarkable conciſeneſs; as thoſe of Aſinius are by the harmonious flow of his language. Brilliancy of ſentiment is Cæſar's characteriſtic; as poignancy of wit is that of Cœlius. Solidity recommends the ſpeeches of Brutus; while copiouſneſs, ſtrength, and vehemence are the predominant qualities in Cicero. Each of them, however, diſplays an equal ſoundneſs of eloquence; and one may eaſily diſcover a general reſemblance

blance and kindred likeneſs run thro their ſeveral works, tho diverſified, indeed, according to their reſpective geniuſes. That they mutually detracted from each other, (as it muſt be owned there are ſome remaining traces of malignity in their letters) is not to be imputed to them as orators, but as men. Calvus, Aſinius, and even Cicero himſelf, were liable, no doubt, to be infected with jealouſy, as well as with other human frailties and imperfections. Brutus, however, I will ſingly except from all imputations of malignity, as I am perſuaded he ſpoke the ſincere and impartial ſentiments of his heart: for can it be ſuppoſed that He ſhould envy Cicero, who does not ſeem to have envied even Cæſar himſelf? As to Galba, Lælius, and ſome others of the antients, whom Aper has thought proper to condemn; I am willing to admit that they have ſome defects, which muſt be aſcribed to a growing and yet immature eloquence.

After all, if we muſt relinquiſh the nobler kind of oratory, and adopt ſome lower ſpecies, I ſhould certainly prefer the impetuoſity of Gracchus, or the incorrectneſs of Craſſus, to the ſtudied foppery of Mæce-

nas, or the childiſh jingle of Gallio: ſo much rather would I ſee eloquence cloathed in the moſt rude and negligent garb, than decked out with the falſe colors of affected ornament! There is ſomething in our preſent manner of elocution, which is ſo far from being oratorical, that it is not even manly; and one would imagine our modern pleaders, by the levity of their wit, the affected ſmoothneſs of their periods, and licentiouſneſs of their ſtyle, had a view to the ſtage in all their compoſitions. Accordingly, ſome of them are not aſhamed to boaſt (which one can ſcarce even mention without a bluſh) that their ſpeeches are adapted to the ſoft modulation of ſtage-muſic. It is this depravity of taſte which has given riſe to the very indecent and prepoſterous, tho very frequent, expreſſion, that ſuch an orator ſpeaks *ſmoothly*, and ſuch a dancer moves *eloquently*. I am willing to admit therefore, that Caſſius Severus (the ſingle modern whom Aper has thought proper to name) when compared to theſe his degenerate ſucceſſors, may juſtly be deemed an orator; tho, it is certain, in the greater part of his compoſitions there appears far more ſtrength than

than ſpirit. He was the firſt who neglected chaſtity of ſtyle, and propriety of method. Inexpert in the uſe of thoſe very weapons with which he engages, he ever lays himſelf open to a thruſt, by always endeavoring to attack; and one may much more properly ſay of him, that he puſhes at random, than that he comports himſelf according to the juſt rules of regular combat. Nevertheleſs, he is greatly ſuperior, as I obſerved before, in the variety of his learning, the agreableneſs of his wit, and the ſtrength of his genius, to thoſe who ſucceeded him: not one of whom, however, has Aper ventured to bring into the field. I imagined, that after having depoſed Aſinius, and Cœlius, and Calvus, he would have ſubſtituted another ſet of orators in their place, and that he had numbers to produce in oppoſition to Cicero, to Cæſar, and the reſt whom he rejected; or at leaſt, one rival to each of them. On the contrary, he has diſtinctly and ſeparately cenſured all the antients, while he has ventured to commend the moderns in general only. He thought, perhaps, if he ſingled out ſome, he ſhould draw upon himſelf the reſent-

ment of all the reſt: for every declaimer among them modeſtly ranks himſelf, in his own fond opinion, before Cicero, tho indeed after Gabinianus. But what Aper was not hardy enough to undertake, I will be bold to execute for him; and draw out his oratorical heroes in full view, that it may appear by what degrees the ſpirit and vigor of antient eloquence was impaired and broken.

Let me rather intreat you (ſaid Maternus interrupting him) to enter, without any farther preface, upon the difficulty you firſt undertook to clear. That we are inferior to the antients in point of eloquence, I by no means want to have proved; being entirely of that opinion: but my preſent enquiry is how to account for our ſinking ſo far below them? A queſtion, it ſeems, you have examined, and which I am perſuaded you would diſcuſs with much calmneſs, if Aper's unmerciful attack upon your favorite orators had not a little diſcompoſed you. I am nothing offended, returned Meſſalla, with the ſentiments which Aper has advanced; neither ought you, my friends, remembering always that it is an eſtabliſhed

law

law in debates of this kind, that every man may with entire ſecurity diſcloſe his unreſerved opinion. Proceed then, I beſeech you, replied Maternus, to the examination of this point concerning the antients, with a freedom equal to theirs: from which I ſuſpect, alas! we have more widely degenerated than even from their eloquence.

THE cauſe (ſaid Meſſalla, reſuming his diſcourſe) does not lie very remote; and, tho you are pleaſed to call upon me to aſſign it, is well known, I doubt not, both to you and to the reſt of this company. For is it not obvious that Eloquence, together with the reſt of the politer arts, has fallen from her antient glory, not for want of admirers, but through the diſſoluteneſs of our youth, the negligence of parents, the ignorance of preceptors, and the univerſal diſregard of antient manners? evils, which derived their ſource from Rome, and thence ſpread themſelves through Italy, and over all the provinces; tho the miſchief, indeed, is moſt obſervable within our own walls. I ſhall take notice, therefore, of thoſe vices to which the youth of this city are more peculiarly expoſed; which riſe upon them in

number as they increaſe in years. But before I enter farther into this ſubject, let me premiſe an obſervation or two concerning the judicious method of diſcipline practiſed by our anceſtors, in training up their children.

In the firſt place then, the virtuous matrons of thoſe wiſer ages did not abandon their infants to the mean hovels of mercenary nurſes, but tenderly reared them up at their own breaſts; eſteeming the careful regulation of their children and domeſtic concerns, as the higheſt point of female merit. It was cuſtomary with them likewiſe to chooſe out ſome elderly female relation, of approved conduct, with whom the family in general entruſted the care of their reſpective children, during their infant years. This venerable perſon ſtrictly regulated, not only their more ſerious purſuits, but even their very amuſements; reſtraining them, by her reſpected preſence, from ſaying or acting any thing contrary to decency and good manners. In this manner, we are informed, Cornelia the mother of the two Gracchi, as alſo Aurelia and Attia, to whom Julius and Auguſtus Cæſar owed their reſpective

ſpective births, undertook this office of family education, and trained up thoſe ſeveral noble youths to whom they were related. This method of diſcipline was attended with one very ſingular advantage: the minds of young men were conducted ſound and untainted to the ſtudy of the noble arts. Accordingly, whatever profeſſion they determined upon, whether that of arms, eloquence, or law, they entirely devoted themſelves to that ſingle purſuit, and with undiſſipated application, poſſeſſed the whole compaſs of their choſen ſcience.

But in the preſent age, the little boy is delegated to the care of ſome paultry Greek chamber-maid, in conjunction with two or three other ſervants (and even thoſe generally of the worſt kind) who are abſolutely unfit for every rational and ſerious office. From the idle tales and groſs abſurdities of theſe worthleſs people, the tender and uninſtructed mind is ſuffered to receive its earlieſt impreſſions. It cannot, indeed, be ſuppoſed, that any caution ſhould be obſerved among the domeſtics; ſince the parents themſelves are ſo far from training their young families to virtue and modeſty,

that they ſet them the firſt examples of luxury and licentiouſneſs. Thus our youth gradually acquire a confirmed habit of impudence, and a total diſregard of that reverence they owe both to themſelves and to others. To ſay truth, it ſeems as if a fondneſs for horſes, actors, and gladiators, the peculiar and diſtinguiſhing folly of this our city, was impreſſed upon them even in the womb: and when once a paſſion of this contemptible ſort has ſeized and engaged the mind, what opening is there left for the noble arts?

All converſation in general is infected with topics of this kind; as they are the conſtant ſubjects of diſcourſe, not only amongſt our youth in their academies, but even of their tutors themſelves. For it is not by eſtabliſhing a ſtrict diſcipline, or by giving proofs of their genius, that this order of men gain pupils: it is by the meaneſt compliances and moſt ſervile flattery. Not to mention how ill inſtructed our youth are in the very elements of literature, ſufficient pains is by no means taken in bringing them acquainted with the beſt authors, or in giving them a proper notion of hiſtory,

together

together with a knowledge of men and things. The whole that ſeems to be conſidered in their education, is, to find out a perſon for them called a Rhetorician. I ſhall take occaſion immediately, to give you ſome account of the riſe and progreſs of this profeſſion in Rome, and ſhew you with what contempt it was received by our anceſtors. But it will be neceſſary to lay before you a previous view of that ſcheme of diſcipline which the antient orators practiſed; of whoſe amazing induſtry and unwearied application to every branch of the polite arts, we meet with many remarkable accounts in their own writings.

I NEED not inform you, that Cicero, in the latter end of his treatiſe entitled Brutus (the former part of which is employed in commemorating the antient orators) gives a ſketch of the ſeveral progreſſive ſteps by which he formed his eloquence. He there acquaints us, that he ſtudied the civil law under Q. Mucius; that he was inſtructed in the ſeveral branches of philoſophy by Philo the Academic, and Diodorus the Stoic; that, not ſatisfied with attending the lectures of thoſe eminent maſters, of which there were

were at that time great numbers in Rome, he made a voyage into Greece and Aſia, in order to enlarge his knowledge, and embrace the whole circle of ſciences. Accordingly he appears by his writings, to have been maſter of logic, ethics, aſtronomy, and natural philoſophy, beſides being well verſed in geometry, muſic, grammar, and, in ſhort, in every one of the fine arts. For thus it is, my worthy friends; from deep learning and the united confluence of the arts and ſciences, the reſiſtleſs torrent of that amazing eloquence derived its ſtrength and rapidity.

The faculties of the orator are not exerciſed, indeed, as in other ſciences, within certain preciſe and determinate limits: on the contrary, eloquence is the moſt comprehenſive of the whole circle of arts. Thus He alone can juſtly be deemed an orator, who knows how to employ the moſt perſuaſive arguments upon every queſtion; who can expreſs himſelf ſuitably to the dignity of his ſubject, with all the powers of grace and harmony; in a word, who can penetrate into every minute circumſtance, and manage the whole train of incidents

cidents to the greateſt advantage of his cauſe. Such, at leaſt, was the high idea which the antients formed of this illuſtrious character. In order however to attain this eminent qualification, they did not think it neceſſary to declaim in the ſchools, and idly waſte their breath upon feigned or frivolous controverſies. It was their wiſer method, to apply themſelves to the ſtudy of ſuch uſeful arts as concern life and manners, as treat of moral good and evil, of juſtice and injuſtice, of the decent and the unbecoming in actions. And, indeed, it is upon points of this nature that the buſineſs of the orator principally turns. For example, in the judiciary kind it relates to matters of equity; as in the deliberate it is employed in determining the fit and the expedient: ſtill however theſe two branches are not ſo abſolutely diſtinct, but that they are frequently blended with each other. Now it is impoſſible, when queſtions of this kind fall under the conſideration of an orator, to enlarge upon them in all the elegant and enlivening ſpirit of an efficacious eloquence, unleſs he is perfectly well acquainted with human nature; unleſs he underſtands the power

power and extent of moral duties, and can diſtinguiſh thoſe actions which do not partake either of vice or virtue.

From the ſame ſource, likewiſe, he muſt derive his influence over the paſſions. For if he is ſkilled, for inſtance, in the nature of indignation, he will be ſo much the more capable of ſoothing or enflaming the breaſts of his judges: if he knows wherein compaſſion conſiſts, and by what workings of the heart it is moved, he will the more eaſily raiſe that tender affection of the ſoul. An orator trained up in this diſcipline, and practiſed in theſe arts, will have full command over the breaſts of his audience, in whatever diſpoſition it may be his chance to find them: and thus furniſhed with all the numberleſs powers of perſuaſion, will judiciouſly vary and accommodate his eloquence, as particular circumſtances and conjunctures ſhall require. There are ſome, we find, who are moſt ſtruck with that manner of elocution, where the arguments are drawn up in a ſhort and cloſe ſtyle: upon ſuch an occaſion the orator will experience the great advantage of being converſant in logic. Others, on the contrary, admire

flowing and diffuſive periods, where the illuſtrations are borrowed from the ordinary and familiar images of common obſervation: here the Peripatetic writers will give him ſome aſſiſtance; as indeed they will, in general, ſupply him with many uſeful hints in all the different methods of popular addreſs. The Academics will inſpire him with a becoming warmth: Plato with ſublimity of ſentiments, and Xenophon with an eaſy and elegant diction. Even the exclamatory manner of Epicurus, or Metrodorus, may be found, in ſome circumſtances, not altogether unſerviceable. In a word, what the Stoics pretend of their wiſe man, ought to be verified in our orator; and he ſhould actually poſſeſs all human knowledge. Accordingly, the antients who applied themſelves to eloquence, not only ſtudied the civil laws, but alſo grammar, poetry, muſic, and geometry. Indeed, there are few cauſes (perhaps I might juſtly ſay there are none) wherein a ſkill in the firſt is not abſolutely neceſſary; as there are many in which an acquaintance with the laſt mentioned ſciences are highly requiſite.

If it ſhould be objected, that "elo-"quence is the ſingle ſcience requiſite for "the orator; as an occaſional recourſe to "the others will be ſufficient for all his "purpoſes:" I anſwer; in the firſt place, there will always be a remarkable difference in the manner of applying what we take up, as it were, upon loan, and what we properly poſſeſs; ſo that it will ever be manifeſt, whether the orator is indebted to others for what he produces, or derives it from his own unborrowed fund. And in the next, the ſciences throw an inexpreſſible grace over our compoſitions, even where they are not immediately concerned; as their effects are diſcernible where we leaſt expect to find them. This powerful charm is not only diſtinguiſhed by the learned and the judicious, but ſtrikes even the moſt common and popular claſs of auditors; inſomuch that one may frequently hear them applauding a ſpeaker of this improved kind, as a man of genuine erudition; as enriched with the whole treaſures of eloquence; and, in one word, acknowledge the complete orator. But I will take the liberty to affirm, that no man ever did, nor indeed

ever

ever can, maintain that exalted character, unleſs he enters the forum ſupported by the full ſtrength of the united arts. Accompliſhments, however, of this ſort are now ſo totally neglected, that the pleadings of our orators are debaſed by the loweſt expreſſions; as a general ignorance both of the laws of our country and the acts of the ſenate, is viſible throughout their performances. All knowledge of the rights and cuſtoms of Rome is profeſſedly ridiculed, and philoſophy ſeems at preſent to be conſidered as ſomething that ought to be ſhunned and dreaded. Thus Eloquence, like a dethroned potentate, is baniſhed her rightful dominions, and confined to barren points and low conceit: and ſhe who was once miſtreſs of the whole circle of ſciences, and charmed every beholder with the goodly appearance of her glorious train, is now ſtripped of all her attendants (I had almoſt ſaid of all her genius) and ſeems as one of the meaneſt of the mechanic arts. This therefore I conſider as the firſt, and the principal reaſon of our having ſo greatly declined from the ſpirit of the antients.

IF I were called upon to ſupport my opinion by authorities, might I not juſtly name, among the Grecians, Demoſthenes? who, we are informed, conſtantly attended the lectures of Plato: as among our own countrymen, Cicero himſelf aſſures us, (and in theſe very words, if I rightly remember) that he owed whatever advances he had made in eloquence, not to the rhetoricians, but to the Academic philoſophers.

OTHER, and very conſiderable, reaſons might be produced for the decay of eloquence. But I leave them, my friends, as it is proper I ſhould, to be mentioned by you; having performed my ſhare in the examination of this queſtion: and with a freedom, which will give, I imagine, as uſual, much offence. I am ſure, at leaſt, if certain of our contemporaries were to be informed of what I have here maintained, I ſhould be told, that in laying it down as a maxim, That a knowledge both of law and philoſophy are eſſential qualifications in an orator, I have been fondly purſuing a phantom of my own imagination.

I AM ſo far from thinking, replied Maternus, you have completed the part you undertook

undertook, that I ſhould rather imagine you had only given us the firſt general ſketch of your deſign. You have marked out to us, indeed, thoſe ſciences wherein the antient orators were inſtructed, and have placed in ſtrong contraſte their ſucceſsful induſtry, with our unperforming ignorance. But ſomething farther ſtill remains: and as you have ſhewn us the ſuperior acquirements of the orators in thoſe more improved ages of eloquence, as well as the remarkable deficiency of thoſe in our own times, I ſhould be glad you would proceed to acquaint us with the particular exerciſes by which the youth of thoſe earlier days were wont to ſtrengthen and improve their geniuſes. For I dare ſay you will not deny, that oratory is acquired by practice far better than by precept: and our other two friends here ſeem willing, I perceive, to admit it.

To which, when Aper and Secundus had ſignified their aſſent, Meſſalla, reſuming his diſcourſe, continued as follows:

HAVING then, as it ſhould ſeem, diſcloſed to your ſatisfaction the ſeeds and firſt principles of antient eloquence, by ſpecifying the ſeveral kinds of arts to which the

antient orators were trained; I ſhall now lay before you the method they purſued, in order to gain a facility in the exertion of eloquence. This indeed I have in ſome meaſure anticipated, by mentioning the preparatory arts to which they applied themſelves: for it is impoſſible to make any progreſs in a compaſs ſo various and ſo abſtruſe, unleſs we not only ſtrengthen our knowledge by reflection, but improve a general aptitude by frequent exerciſe. Thus it appears that the ſame ſteps muſt be purſued in exerting our oratory, as in attaining it. But if this truth ſhould not be univerſally admitted; if any ſhould think, that eloquence may be poſſeſſed without paying previous court to her attendant ſciences; moſt certainly, at leaſt, it will not be denied, that a mind duly impregnated with the polite arts, will enter with ſo much the more advantage upon thoſe exerciſes peculiar to the oratorical circus.

ACCORDINGLY, our anceſtors when they deſigned a young man for the profeſſion of eloquence, having previouſly taken due care of his domeſtic education, and ſeaſoned his mind with uſeful knowledge, introduced

introduced him to the moſt eminent orator in Rome. From that time the youth commenced his conſtant follower, attending him upon all occaſions, whether he appeared in the public aſſemblies of the people, or in the courts of civil judicature. Thus he learned, if I may uſe the expreſſion, the arts of oratorical conflict in the very field of battle. The advantages which flowed from this method, were conſiderable: it animated the courage and quickened the judgment of youth, thus to receive their inſtructions in the eye of the world, and in the midſt of affairs; when no man could advance an abſurd or a weak argument without being rejected by the bench, expoſed by his adverſary, and, in a word, deſpiſed by the whole audience. By this method they imbibed the pure and uncorrupted ſtreams of genuine eloquence. But tho they chiefly attached themſelves to one particular orator, they heard likewiſe all the reſt of their contemporary pleaders, in many of their reſpective debates. Hence alſo they had an opportunity of acquainting themſelves with the various ſentiments of the people, and of obſerving what pleaſed

or diſguſted them moſt in the ſeveral orators of the forum. By this means they were ſupplied with an inſtructor of the beſt and moſt improving kind, exhibiting, not the feigned ſemblance of Eloquence, but her real and lively manifeſtation: not a pretended, but a genuine adverſary, armed in earneſt for the combat; an audience ever full and ever new, compoſed of foes as well as friends, and where not a ſingle expreſſion could fall uncenſured, or unapplauded. For you will agree with me, I am well perſuaded, when I aſſert, that a ſolid and laſting reputation of eloquence muſt be acquired by the cenſure of our enemies, as well as by the applauſe of our friends; or rather, indeed, it is from the former that it derives its ſureſt and moſt unqueſtioned ſtrength and firmneſs. Accordingly, a youth thus formed to the bar, a frequent and attentive hearer of the moſt illuſtrious orators and debates, inſtructed by the experience of others, acquainted with the popular taſte, and daily converſant in the laws of his country; to whom the ſolemn preſence of the judges, and the awful eyes of a full audience were familiar, roſe at once into affairs,

and

and was equal to every cauſe. Hence it was that Craſſus at the age of nineteen, Cæſar at twenty one, Pollio at twenty two, and Calvus when he was but a few years older, pronounced thoſe ſeveral ſpeeches againſt Carbo, Dolabella, Cato, and Vatinius, which we read to this hour with admiration.

On the other hand, our modern youth receive their education under certain declaimers called Rhetoricians: a ſet of men who made their firſt appearance in *Rome*, a little before the time of Cicero. And that they were by no means approved by our anceſtors, plainly appears from their being enjoined, under the cenſorſhip of Craſſus and Domitius, to ſhut up their ſchools of *impudence*, as Cicero expreſſes it.—But I was going to ſay, we are ſent to certain academies, where it is hard to determine whether the place, the company, or the method of inſtruction is moſt likely to infect the minds of young people, and produce a wrong turn of thought. For nothing, certainly, can there be of an affecting ſolemnity in an audience, where all who compoſe it are of the ſame low degree of underſtanding; nor

any advantage to be received from their fellow-ſtudents, where a parcel of boys and raw youths of unripe judgments harangue before each other, without the leaſt fear or danger of criticiſm. And as for their exerciſes, they are ridiculous in their very nature. They conſiſt of two kinds, and are either declamatory or controverſial. The firſt, as being eaſier and requiring leſs ſkill, is aſſigned to the younger lads: the other is the taſk of more mature years. But, good gods! with what incredible abſurdity are they compoſed! The truth is, the ſtyle of their declamations is as falſe and contemptible, as the ſubjects are uſeleſs and fictitious. Thus, being taught to harangue in a moſt pompous diction, on the rewards due to tyrannicides, on the election to be made by deflowered virgins[d], on the licentiouſneſs of married woman, on the ceremonies to be obſerved in times of peſtilence, with other topics of the ſame unconcerning kind, which are daily debated in the ſchools, and

[d] It was one of the queſtions uſually debated in theſe rhetoric ſchools, whether the party who had been raviſhed ſhould chooſe to marry the violator of her chaſtity, or rather have him put to death.

ſcarce

ſcarce ever at the bar; " they appear abſo-
" lute novices in the affairs of the world,
" and are by much too elevated for com-
" mon life."

" [e] Here Meſſalla pauſed: when Secun-
" dus, taking his turn in the converſation,
" began with obſerving, that" the true and lofty ſpirit of genuine eloquence, like that of a clear and vigorous flame, is nouriſhed by proper fuel, excited by agitation, and ſtill brightens as it burns. It was in this manner, " ſaid he," that the oratory of our anceſtors was kindled and ſpread itſelf.

[e] The latter part of Meſſalla's diſcourſe, together with what immediately followed it in the original, is loſt: The chaſm, however, does not ſeem to be ſo great as ſome of the commentators ſuſpect. The tranſlator therefore has ventured to fill it up in his own way, with thoſe lines which are diſtinguiſhed by inverted comma's. He has likewiſe given the next ſubſequent part of the converſation, to Secundus; tho it does not appear in the original to whom it belongs. It would be of no great importance to the Engliſh reader, to juſtify this laſt article: tho, perhaps, it would not be very difficult, if it were neceſſary.

To ſave the reader the trouble of turning to a ſecond note upon a like occaſion, it is proper to obſerve in this place, that he will find the ſame inverted comma's in page 448, 9. The words included between them, are alſo an addition of the tranſlator's: and for the ſame reaſon as that juſt now mentioned.

The moderns have as much merit of this kind, perhaps, as can be acquired under a ſettled and peaceable government: but far inferior, no doubt, to that which ſhone out in the times of licentiouſneſs and confuſion, when He was deemed the ableſt orator, who had moſt influence over a reſtleſs and ungoverned multitude. To this ſituation of public affairs was owing thoſe continual debates concerning the Agrarian laws, and the popularity conſequent thereupon; thoſe long harangues of the magiſtrates, thoſe impeachments of the great, thoſe factions of the nobles, thoſe hereditary enmities in particular families, and in fine, thoſe inceſſant ſtruggles between the ſenate and the commons: which, tho each of them prejudicial to the ſtate, yet moſt certainly contributed to produce and encourage that rich vein of eloquence which diſcovered itſelf in thoſe tempeſtuous days. The way to dignities lay directly through the paths of eloquence. The more a man ſignalized himſelf by his abilities in this art, ſo much the more eaſily he opened his road to preferment, and maintained an aſcendant over his collegues, at the ſame time that it heightened

heightened his intereſt with the nobles, his authority with the ſenate, and his reputation with the people in general. The patronage of theſe admired orators was courted even by foreign nations; as the ſeveral magiſtrates of our own, endeavored to recommend themſelves to their favor and protection, by ſhewing them the higheſt marks of honor whenever they ſet out for the adminiſtration of their reſpective provinces, and by ſtudiouſly cultivating a friendſhip with them at their return. They were called upon, without any ſolicitation on their own part, to fill up the ſupreme dignities of the ſtate. Nor were they even in a private ſtation without great power, as by means of the perſuaſive arts they had a very conſiderable influence over both the ſenate and the people. The truth is, it was an eſtabliſhed maxim in thoſe days, that without the oratorical talents, no man could either acquire or maintain any high poſt in the government. And no wonder indeed, that ſuch notion ſhould univerſally prevail: ſince it was impoſſible for any perſon endued with this commanding art, to paſs his life in obſcurity, how much ſoever

ever it might be agreable to his own inclinations; ſince it was not ſufficient merely to vote in the ſenate, without ſupporting that vote with good ſenſe and eloquence; ſince in all public impeachments or civil cauſes, the accuſed was obliged to anſwer to the charge in his own perſon; ſince written depoſitions were not admitted in judicial matters, but the witneſſes were called upon to deliver their evidence in open court. Thus our anceſtors were eloquent, as much by neceſſity as by encouragements. To be poſſeſſed of the perſuaſive talents, was eſteemed the higheſt glory; as the contrary character was held in the utmoſt contempt. In a word, they were incited to the purſuit of oratory, by a principle of honor as well as by a view of intereſt. They dreaded the diſgrace of being conſidered rather as clients than patrons; of loſing thoſe dependants which their anceſtors had tranſmitted to them, and ſeeing them mix in the train of others; in ſhort, of being looked upon as men of mean abilities, and conſequently either paſſed over in the diſpoſal of high offices, or deſpiſed in the adminiſtration of them.

I KNOW

I KNOW not whether thoſe antient hiſtorical pieces, which were lately collected and publiſhed by Mucianus from the old libraries where they have hitherto been preſerved, have yet fallen into your hands. This collection conſiſts of eleven volumes of the public journals, and three of epiſtles; by which it appears that Pompey and Craſſus gained as much advantage from their eloquence as their arms; that Lucullus, Metellus, Lentulus, Curio, and the reſt of thoſe diſtinguiſhed chiefs, devoted themſelves with great application to this inſinuating art: in a word, that not a ſingle perſon in thoſe times roſe to any conſiderable degree of power, without the aſſiſtance of the rhetorical talents.

To theſe conſiderations may be farther added, that the dignity and importance of the debates in which the antients were engaged, contributed greatly to advance their eloquence. Moſt certain, indeed, it is, that an orator muſt neceſſarily find great difference with reſpect to his powers, when he is to harangue only upon ſome trifling robbery, or a little paultry form of pleading; and when the faculties of his mind are warmed

warmed and enlivened by ſuch intereſting and animating topics as bribery at elections, as the oppreſſion of our allies, or the maſſacre of our fellow-citizens. Evils theſe, which beyond all peradventure, it were better ſhould never happen; and we have reaſon to rejoice that we live under a government where we are ſtrangers to ſuch terrible calamities: ſtill it muſt be acknowledged, that wherever they did happen, they were wonderful incentives to eloquence. For the orator's genius riſes and expands itſelf in proportion to the dignity of the occaſion upon which it is exerted; and I will lay it down as a maxim, that it is impoſſible to ſhine out in all the powerful luſtre of genuine eloquence, without being inflamed by a ſuitable importance of ſubject. Thus the ſpeech of Demoſthenes againſt his guardians, ſcarcely, I imagine, eſtabliſhed his character; as it was not the defence of Archias, or Quinctius, that acquired Cicero the reputation of a conſummate orator. It was Catiline, and Milo, and Verres, and Mark Antony, that warmed him with that noble glow of eloquence, which gave the finiſhing brightneſs to his unequalled fame.

Far

Far am I from inſinuating, that ſuch infamous characters deſerve to be tolerated in a ſtate, in order to ſupply convenient matter of oratory: All I contend for is, that this art floriſhes to moſt advantage in turbulent times. Peace, no doubt, is infinitely preferable to war; but it is the latter only that forms the ſoldier. It is juſt the ſame with eloquence: the oftner ſhe enters, if I may ſo ſay, the field of battle; the more wounds ſhe gives and receives; the more powerful the adverſary with which ſhe contends, ſo much the more ennobled ſhe appears in the eye of mankind. For it is the diſpoſition of human nature, always to admire what we ſee is attended with danger and difficulty in others, how much ſoever we may chooſe eaſe and ſecurity for ourſelves.

ANOTHER advantage which the antient orators had over the moderns, is, that they were not confined in their pleadings, as we are, to a few hours. On the contrary, they were at liberty to adjourn as often as they thought proper; they were unlimited as to the number of days or of counſel, and every orator might extend his ſpeech to the length moſt agreable to himſelf. Pompey, in his third

third conſulſhip, was the firſt who curbed the ſpirit of eloquence: ſtill however permitting all cauſes to be heard, agreably to the laws, in the forum and before the Prætors. How much more conſiderable the buſineſs of thoſe magiſtrates was, than that of the Centumvirs, who at preſent determine all cauſes, is evident from this circumſtance, that not a ſingle oration of Cicero, Cæſar, or Brutus, or in ſhort of any one celebrated orator, was ſpoken before theſe laſt, excepting only thoſe of Pollio in favor of the heirs of Urbinia. But then it muſt be remembered, that theſe were delivered about the middle of the reign of Auguſtus, when a long and uninterrupted peace abroad, a perfect tranquillity at home, together with the general good conduct of that wiſe prince, had damped the flames of eloquence as well as thoſe of ſedition.

You will ſmile, perhaps, at what I am going to ſay, and I mention it for that purpoſe: but is there not ſomething in the preſent confined garb of our orators, that has an ill effect even upon their elocution, and makes it appear low and contemptible? May we not ſuppoſe likewiſe, that much

of the ſpirit of oratory is ſunk, by that cloſe and deſpicable ſcene wherein many of our cauſes are now debated? For the orator, like a generous ſteed, requires a free and open ſpace wherein to expatiate; otherwiſe the force of his powers is broken, and half the energy of his talents is checked in their career. There is another circumſtance alſo exceedingly prejudicial to the intereſt of eloquence, as it prevents a due attention to ſtyle: we are now obliged to enter upon our ſpeech whenever the judge calls upon us; not to mention the frequent interruptions which ariſe by the examination of witneſſes. Beſides, the courts of judicature are at preſent ſo unfrequented, that the orator ſeems to ſtand alone, and talk to bare walls. But eloquence rejoices in the clamor of loud applauſe, and exults in a full audience, ſuch as uſed to preſs round the antient orators when the forum ſtood thronged with nobles; when a numerous retinue of clients, when foreign ambaſſadors, and whole cities aſſiſted at the debate; and when even Rome herſelf was concerned in the event. The very appearance of that prodigious con-

courſe

courſe of people, which attended the trials of Beſtia, Cornelius, Scaurus, Milo, and Vatinius, muſt have enflamed the breaſt of the coldeſt orator. Accordingly we find, that of all the antient orations now extant, there are none which have more eminently diſtinguiſhed their authors, than thoſe which were pronounced under ſuch favorable circumſtances. To theſe advantages we may farther add likewiſe, the frequent general aſſemblies of the people, the privilege of arraigning the moſt conſiderable perſonages, and the popularity of ſuch impeachments; when the ſons of oratory ſpared not even Scipio, Sylla, or Pompey; and when, in conſequence of ſuch acceptable attacks upon ſuſpected power, they were ſure of being heard by the people with the utmoſt attention and regard. How muſt theſe united cauſes contribute to raiſe the genius, and inſpire the eloquence of the ancients!

"MATERNUS, who, you will re-
" member, was in the midſt of his ha-
" rangue in favor of poetry when Meſſal-
" la firſt entered into the room, finding
" Secundus was now ſilent, took that op-
" portunity

" portunity of reſuming his invective a-
" gainſt the exerciſe of the oratorical arts in
" general." That ſpecies of eloquence, ſaid he, wherein poetry is concerned, is calm and peaceable, moderate and virtuous: whereas that other ſupreme kind which my two friends here have been deſcribing, is the offspring of licentiouſneſs (by fools miſcalled liberty) and the companion of ſedition; bold, obſtinate, and haughty, unknowing how to yield or how to obey, an encourager of a lawleſs populace, and a ſtranger in all well-regulated communities. Who ever heard of an orator in Lacedæmon or Crete? cities which exerciſed the ſevereſt diſcipline, and were governed by the ſtricteſt laws. We have no account of Perſian or Macedonian eloquence, or indeed of that of any other ſtate which ſubmitted to a regular adminiſtration of government. Whereas Rhodes and Athens (places of popular rule, where all things lay open to all men) ſwarmed with orators innumerable. In the ſame manner, Rome, while ſhe was under no ſettled policy; while ſhe was torn with parties, diſſentions, and factions; while there was no peace in the forum, no har-

mony in the ſenate, no moderation in the judges; while there was neither reverence paid to ſuperiors, nor bounds preſcribed to magiſtrates—Rome, under theſe circumſtances, produced, beyond all diſpute, a ſtronger and brighter vein of eloquence; as ſome valuable plants will floriſh even in the wildeſt ſoil. But the tongue of the Gracchi did nothing compenſate the republic for their ſeditious laws; nor the ſuperior eloquence of Cicero make him any amends for his ſad cataſtrophe.

THE truth is, the forum (that ſingle remain which now ſurvives of antient oratory) is, even in its preſent ſituation, an evident proof that all things amongſt us are not conducted in that well-ordered manner one could wiſh. For, tell me, is it not the guilty or the miſerable alone, that fly to us for aſſiſtance? When any community implores our protection, is it not becauſe it either is inſulted by ſome neighboring ſtate, or torn by domeſtic feuds? And what province ever ſeeks our patronage, till ſhe has been plundered or oppreſſed? But far better it ſurely is, never to have been injured, than at laſt to be redreſſed. If there was a government

vernment in the world free from commotions and diſturbances, the profeſſion of oratory would there be as uſeleſs, as that of medicine to the ſound: and as the phyſician would have little practice or profit among the healthy and the ſtrong, ſo neither would the orator have much buſineſs or honor where obedience and good manners univerſally prevail. To what purpoſe are ſtudied ſpeeches in a ſenate, where the better and the major part of the aſſembly are already of one mind? What the expediency of haranguing the populace, where public affairs are not determined by the voice of an ignorant and giddy multitude, but by the ſteddy wiſdom of a ſingle perſon? To what end voluntary informations, where crimes are unfrequent and inconſiderable? or of labored and invidious defences, where the clemency of the judge is ever on the ſide of the accuſed? Believe me then, my worthy (and, as far as the circumſtances of the age require, my eloquent) friends, had the gods reverſed the date of your exiſtence, and placed *You* in the times of thoſe antients we ſo much admire, and *Them* in yours; *You* would not have fallen ſhort of that glorious

ſpirit which diſtinguiſhed their oratory, nor would *they* have been deſtitute of a proper temperature and moderation. But ſince a high reputation for eloquence is not conſiſtent with great repoſe in the public; let every age enjoy its own peculiar advantages, without derogating from thoſe of a former.

MATERNUS having ended; Meſſalla obſerved, that there were ſome points which his friend had laid down, that were not perfectly agreable to his ſentiments; as there were others, which he wiſhed to hear explained more at large: but the time is now, ſaid he, too far advanced. If I have maintained any thing, replied Maternus, which requires to be opened more explicitly, I ſhall be ready to clear it up in ſome future conference: at the ſame time riſing from his ſeat and embracing Aper; Meſſalla and I (continued he ſmiling) ſhall arraign you, be well aſſured, before the poets and admirers of the antients. And I both of you (returned Aper) before the rhetoricians. Thus we parted in mutual good humour.

FINIS.

